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Gore's hawk may prey on Democrats

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

The first debate among the Democratic presidential candidates, held July 1 in Houston on William F. Buckley Jr.'s *Firing Line*, was boring. The candidates were visibly nervous. Tennessee Sen. Albert Gore, attempting to curry favor with the South, listed as his "personal heroes" two presidents from Tennessee, "Jackson and Knox." ("Knox" appeared to be a reference to James K. Polk.) And when asked which of five presidential portraits he would remove from the Cabinet room—Lincoln, Jefferson, Taft, Coolidge and Eisenhower—the Rev. Jesse Jackson suggested removing Herbert Hoover's portrait.

But the last three debates, held in Des Moines, Iowa, on September 27, Miami on October 5 and Washington, D.C. on October 7, have been considerably more interesting. This was largely because Gore used these debates to distinguish his foreign policy views from those of the other candidates. Gore's dissent from what had previously appeared to be a calm consensus sparked heated ex-

political action committee to raise \$2.5 million for his campaign, he changed his mind. (See *In These Times*, April 29). Later Gore picked up the support of *New Republic* owner Martin Peretz, who had taught Gore at Harvard and who is also helping raise money for his campaign. Conservative Democrats around former Virginia Gov. Chuck Robb's Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) and the Coalition for a Democratic Majority also began to take an interest in Gore. He failed, however, to win significant endorsements in Iowa, New Hampshire and even in the South. Gore remained at the back of the field with former Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt and Sen. Joe Biden. But last month Gore changed his strategy. While his voting record in the House and Senate was not dramatically different from that of Rep. Richard Gephardt and Sen. Paul Simon, Gore tried to stake out a position rhetorically, if not substantively, to their right and to the right of the other candidates.

At the Des Moines debate sponsored by the anti-nuclear STAR-PAC, Gore attacked Gephardt and STAR-PAC for favoring a flight test ban and candidate Michael Dukakis for advocating the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea. When Simon chided him for having supported the B-1 bomber, MX missile and other weapons systems, Gore responded, "The question itself is part of the problem of the Democratic Party. The American people have been given the impression over the last several presidential elections that the Democratic Party is against every weapons system that is suggested, and is prepared to go into negotiations with the Soviet Union on the basis that we will get something for nothing."

In Miami, at a debate sponsored by the DLC and moderated by ABC newsman Ted Koppel, Gore found a more congenial audience, and he played up the differences even more sharply. While the other candidates avoided Koppel's question of what they would do if the Sandinistas later violated the Central American peace pact, Gore threatened an "economic boycott [of Nicaragua] leading to a blockade." Gore also pointed out that "unlike my fellow candidates, I've taken a position supporting maintenance aid at a low level [for the contras] while the Arias [peace] plan is being negotiated."

When Koppel asked the candidates whether they supported covert action, Dukakis said he would not support it to "assassinate people and overthrow governments." What about Grenada? Gore interjected. "I think we had a right to go in there," he continued. "There was a request from allies in the Caribbean to go in there." (But numerous reports, including Bob Woodward's *Veil*, make clear that the Reagan administration manipulated the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States into requesting an invasion after it had already decided to invade.)

At a speech the next day at the National Press Club in Washington, Gore took the offensive again. "The politics of retreat, complacency and doubt may appeal to others, but it will not do for me, or for my country," Gore said, adding that he feared "that our national party risks losing the faith and trust of the mainstream voters who have always supplied our mandate."

At the debate at the Kennedy Center sponsored by the Democratic National Committee and held before DNC officials who would be delegates to the Democratic Convention

next year, Simon and Gephardt both accused Gore of creating what Gephardt called "phony differences." "I don't think it helps any of us to be knifing each other," Simon said. Gore answered, "If we have a debate, there will be serious disagreements." To which Simon replied, "One of us will emerge as a candidate. We should be conducting ourselves so that there is meaning and not just sound, and we should be pulling our party together, not pulling it apart." Gore responded, "To pretend that there are no differences in our party is completely unrealistic. We have disagreements in our party, and we have been losing presidential elections rather consistently. One of the reasons is that the vast majority of Americans believe that this nation must have a strong defense and must defend itself when challenged."

In his concluding statement Gore said, "Let us be candid about the fact that we have created a nominating process that has pushed all our candidates toward a single homogeneous view that is wildly appealing to a minority of Americans."

Washington illusions: Yet Gore's attack against the Democratic primary process bears out the peculiarity of his own position. If the Democratic nominating process forces candidates who want to win to embrace left-wing foreign policy positions, then Gore is making sure that he won't win the nomination. What is he really up to?

In the short run, his strategy is to attract endorsements from the Southern Democratic leadership. After his appearance in Des Moines he was endorsed by 200 Florida state legislators calling themselves "Committed '88." Gore also appeared determined to win the support of the Democrats in the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and Democratic Leadership Council who would have like to support Georgia's Sen. Sam Nunn for president. Gore also seems to have fallen prey to the illusions of these Washington Democrats, who continue to believe that there is a latent Democratic majority that a Democratic hawk can bring to the surface. The late Sen. Henry Jackson failed in 1976 and Sen. John Glenn failed in 1984. In 1988 these Democrats are placing their hopes on "Super Tuesday" March 8 when 14 Southern and border states choose their nominees.

But it's doubtful that a conservative Democrat will be able to base his campaign on the promise of Super Tuesday. First, a candidate who does not come in a close third or better in Iowa and New Hampshire will lack credibility going into the next round of primaries. In 1984 former Florida Gov. Reubin Askew and South Carolina Sen. Fritz Hollings were both out of the race before the March Southern primaries. Second, the electorate that votes in the Southern Democratic primaries and caucuses tends to be liberal rather than conservative. Even in 1984, without a significant Republican contest to attract Democratic crossovers, Sen. Gary Hart, former Vice President Walter Mondale and Jackson soundly defeated Glenn, the more conservative candidate, in the early Southern primaries.

It's unlikely that Gore can capture the presidential nomination, but he can make it more difficult for the Democrat who is nominated to win next fall. He is correct in this respect: many American voters have looked to presidential candidates for something they identify with strength. And voters tend to identify strength with tough talk and with a willingness to use military force.

The challenge for the Democrats is to change the terms of debate in 1988: to identify America's weakness not with its military but with its aging economy, and to hold out the promise of national economic revitalization rather than nuclear superiority. But Gore's Democratic supporters are basically uninterested in the economy and in domestic concerns. They want to replay the 1972 Democratic primary—when the anti-war candidate, Sen. George McGovern, bested Henry Jackson and Sen. Hubert Humphrey—only this time they want to win.

Gore is following their script. In the debates, he has had very little to say about the domestic economy. And he is getting the other candidates to focus on foreign policy. During the debate in Washington the section devoted to the economy turned into a raging debate over the Midgetman missile and the Mideast. The Democrats have not been able to compete with the Republicans on this terrain in the past, and they may not be able to do so in 1988 either.

INSIDE STORY

changes with the others. It also threatened to shape the Democratic debate in 1988 in a way that might be very harmful to the party.

Overthrowing governments: Gore's candidacy had an ignominious beginning. Last March he announced that he would not run for president. Then, three weeks later, buoyed by the commitment of fat-cat Nathan Landow's

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By Diana Johnstone

EMERGING FROM HIS LONG SUMMER HOLIDAY, Mikhail Gorbachov made an important speech at an October 1 public rally in Murmansk. The Soviet leader proposed nothing less than to reverse the growing militarization of the northern seas in favor of joint international peaceful economic development.

Located inside the Arctic Circle, Murmansk is the home port of the Soviet North Fleet, including the Soviet strategic nuclear submarines. Under the Reagan administration, the U.S. Navy has adopted the so-called "maritime strategy" of preparing to bottle the Soviet fleet into Murmansk and even attack the heavily armed Kola Peninsula from the sea in case of East-West conflict.

The U.S. is already deploying hundreds of sea-based nuclear cruise missiles in the northern seas, and Manfred Wörner, West German defense minister and probably the next NATO secretary general, calls for replacing the NATO land-based missiles with sea-based missiles to keep Soviet territory "vulnerable." U.S. secret nuclear submarine tracking operations have led to dangerous collisions close to Soviet shores.

Gorbachov alluded to this situation by mentioning that the northern seas were not only "the kitchen of good and bad weather" for the northern hemisphere, but also a region affected "by the icy winds of the Pentagon's polar strategy. A gigantic nuclear potential has been concentrated on board submarines and surface vessels," he said. "It acts on the political climate in the whole world and is capable in turn of exploding in case of a military-political accident in some other part of the world."

Gorbachov invited all of the region's countries to discuss security problems with a view to a "drastic reduction of the level of military confrontation in the region." He proposed that NATO and the Warsaw Pact begin consultations about scaling down military activity, limiting naval and air forces and extending confidence-building measures to the Baltic, North, Norwegian and Greenland Seas. Beyond that, he suggested that both sides work toward banning military activity in major international shipping lanes.

One can imagine that the U.S. admirals who have boasted that "the Norwegian Sea is ours and we intend to keep it that way" will only take Gorbachov's speech as a sign that the U.S. has got the Russian bear on the run and should keep up the pressure. However, there are important forces and trends pointing in Gorbachov's direction.

An order hard to refuse: The U.S. "maritime strategy" in the north depends on the active cooperation of Norway and other northern allies. As the "Soviet threat" to Scandinavia steadily loses credibility thanks to Gorbachov, Norway's circle of NATO enthusiasts is likely to be increasingly isolated. Moreover, Gorbachov has something to offer in exchange for sterile militarization; peaceful economic development.

Stressing the Soviet Union's interest in developing Arctic resources, Gorbachov suggested a joint northern European energy program for the difficult extraction of the Arctic's "truly inexhaustible" energy reserves. The USSR was ready to invite Canada and Norway to set up joint companies for petroleum and gas prospecting on the great north-



If Gorbachov achieves detente in the North Atlantic, what will all those U.S. ships do?

East-West conflict moves from northern seas to southern gulf

ern continental shelf, he said.

Gorbachov proposed holding a conference of Arctic states in Murmansk next year as well as a joint global plan for protection of the northern environment. Finally, "the shortest sea lane linking Europe to the Far East and the Pacific goes by way of the Arctic," Gorbachov said. "We could open up the great northern sea lane to foreign ships preceded by our icebreakers depending on the normalization of international relations."

This constructive approach is not likely to fall on deaf ears in Scandinavia.

As for the U.S., the "maritime strategy" has been under heavy attack from the defense policy establishment and is unlikely to survive a new administration in Washington. It was championed by John F. Lehman Jr., who resigned last February as secretary of the Navy. The strategy's only acknowledged virtue was to wrest naval appropriations from a Congress demanding anti-Soviet strategic rationales for military expenditures. Now that the appropriations for the "600-ship Navy" have been duly wrested, more attention is being paid to the chorus of experts who have denounced the strategy as absurd and suicidal.

It seems probable that a combination of the peace movements of northern Europe, Gorbachov's proposals and simple military common sense may work to deprive the U.S. Navy of much of its vast and foolhardy mission in the Arctic seas. But it is unthinkable that an institution providing so many people with a good living should be left with nothing to do. New missions must be found for the U.S. Navy, if only for the sake of the militarized American economy. Luckily, as the wicked gleam of the Evil Empire fades in the Gorbachovian light of reason, a new Evil Enemy has appeared on the northern shores of the Arab-Persian Gulf.

Whatever else the U.S. is doing in the

Gulf—and the whole world is wondering—it is establishing a new role for the Navy that may turn out to be just as ambitious and foolhardy as the northern "maritime strategy." Yet it marks a return to the traditional role of the Navy as imperialism's roving patrol force. It was apparently only the "Vietnam syndrome" of the '70s that obliged the admirals to dream up a strategy aimed directly at Soviet land power rather than at the usual targets of naval "power projection" in the Third World. Thanks to the hate images developed around Muammar Khadafi and the Ayatollah Khomeini, the West may be able to return to its traditions, despite Gorbachov's failure to play bad guy.

It is noteworthy that opponents of the maritime strategy have never argued that the U.S. Navy should drop such foolishness and sail home. Rather, the idea has been that pretending to win World War III in Murmansk has distracted the admirals from their proper task elsewhere. Thus leading defense establishment figure Robert W. Komer has pointed out that the U.S. "sees Third World conflict affecting U.S. interests as much more likely to occur than overt Warsaw Pact aggression against NATO."

Thus while a clear choice may be emerging between militarization and peaceful development in northern Europe, the picture is by no means so bright globally.

Looming questions: The Gulf provides a timely alternative to fixation on Soviet nuclear submarines. But the big question puzzling the world is, just what is the Navy doing there? The short answer of most regional observers is "trying to pick a fight." The long-term answer is not so easy. The usual reasons given do not make sense.

The top official pretext is to "protect international shipping," especially oil tankers, but everyone knows the U.S. is there to provide cover for Iraq attacks on Iranian oil ship-

ments by stopping Iran from retaliating. The next reason given is to keep Soviet influence from overwhelming the Gulf. But this could more cheaply be achieved by accepting the Soviet offer to withdraw all foreign warships, including their own—three, compared to a couple of dozen U.S. ships.

Another reason cited is to get the Arab Gulf states to grant the U.S. basing rights, but this does not seem to be working, and the way the U.S. is blustering into a delicate situation seems to make the Arabs more reluctant than ever to deepen their alliance. Or it is said that the Bechtel branch of the government represented by Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger want to make up for the damage done to U.S. credibility in the Arab world by the Iran-contra arms caper. This is a pitifully short-range motive.

If there is any serious long-range thinking behind the Gulf expedition, then it must be related to the promotion of "out of area" missions in NATO. What is special about the Gulf expedition is its use to bully the U.S.' allies, both NATO members and Japan, into joining in. The U.S. administration claims to be in the Gulf in order to protect "the West's oil" from the Iranians. This is absurd, because it is in fact Iran's oil that is being threatened by the Iraqis, who want to prevent Iran from selling it to the West. But the story convinces American public opinion, which can then be turned against the "ungrateful allies." This, more than the Mullahs, always scares Europeans—especially when the U.S. trade deficit is likely to give an extra boost to any pretext for protectionism.

In any case, the combination of "our oil" to be protected plus the supposed danger of Islamic fanaticism is the best combination of frights to justify pulling "the West" together in military operations that are called for neither by international treaty nor by the democratic process prevailing in the various allied countries.

Going along: Getting the British and French to tag along was the easiest, given the colonialist past of those two nations. Italy was more difficult, as Christian Democratic Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, reputedly the wildest statesman in Western Europe, stubbornly defended Italian national interests against the stampede. But the Italian defense ministry got its way and sent a token contribution to the Gulf. Protest demonstrations got underway in Italy on September 17.

Of the major NATO allies, West Germany has been able to hide behind its constitution banning overseas military operations outside the NATO defense area. But the Germans are taking their place—primarily on land—in the military division of labor.

Last August 1, the day after Saudi guards massacred 400 Iranian pilgrims in circumstances that remain controversial, the Bonn Interior Ministry announced it was lending a top anti-terrorist specialist, Gen. Ulrich Wegener, to the Saudi Arabian government.

One paradox of the Gulf adventure is that the more the U.S. bungles the operation, the more the NATO allies may feel they have to get involved, to keep the Americans from wrecking everything. A richer paradox, with interesting long-term implications, is that the more the USSR promotes disarmament in northern Europe, the more the European allies are freed to shift forces southward for the wars in the Third World. □

INSHORT

Joel Bleifuss

La Prensa reopens, history is made

On October 1 the Nicaraguan government, meeting the free-press requirement of the regional peace plan, allowed the pro-contra newspaper *La Prensa* back on the newsstands. The mainstream media in the U.S. ballyhooed the event, but strangely overlooked a link between *La Prensa's* owners, the Chamorra family, and the contras. The Nicaraguan Resistance of Washington, D.C., describes itself as at "war against the Sandinista regime" and says that "the fronts of war are unified under the command" of a six-person directorate. One of the six people is Pedro Joaquin Chamorra. A spokeswoman at contra headquarters in Washington told *In These Times* that Pedro, in addition to directing the war, is now co-editor of *La Prensa*. In lifting the ban on *La Prensa*, Nicaragua has undoubtedly become the first nation in history that has allowed the enemy it is at war with to publish its own daily newspaper.

La Prensa's endowment

La Prensa will never want for money. The *Texas Observer* reports that Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (R-TX) has promised to help the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) ensure that *La Prensa* remains solvent. The NED is a business/labor organization that Congress has mandated to promote democracy abroad. According to former CIA agent John Stockwell, the NED is also an ancillary organ of the CIA.

Remember Allende?

Some folks do, no thanks to the institutional ignorance served up by the media of record. For example, read any *New York Times* news story about Chile and you come away with the impression that Chilean despot Augusto Pinochet led the September 1973 coup that overthrew Salvador Allende. Not a mention is made that this coup against a democratically elected government was orchestrated in Washington. Can it be that nobody at the *New York Times* has heard of the 1975 Church Commission Report? This report, named after the late Sen. Frank Church (D-ID) who headed the post-Watergate congressional investigation into CIA and FBI misdeeds, sets the record straight. Regarding the coup in Chile, it says: "Besides funding political parties the [CIA] approved large amounts to sustain opposition media and thus to maintain a hard-hitting propaganda campaign. The CIA spent \$1.5 million in support of *El Mercurio*, the country's largest newspaper and the most important channel for anti-Allende propaganda. According to CIA documents, these efforts played a significant role in setting the stage for the military coup of Sept. 11, 1973."

Well, it worked in Chile

Do you read the op-ed foreign policy pieces in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* or whatever regional journal of record? Do you ever wonder where on earth they find so many jackdaws eager to expound authoritarian principles? Well, a General Accounting Office (GAO) report released a couple of weeks ago has a partial answer. In June 1983 the White House established the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean—known by the mysterious acronym S/LPD. According to the GAO, this office was set up to engage in "prohibited covert propaganda activities designed to influence the media and the public to support the administration's Latin American policies." The GAO unearthed a "confidential eyes only" memorandum on the subject of "white propaganda operations" from the S/LPD's Johnathan Miller to Pat Buchanan, President Reagan's then-director of communications. Miller described five such operations. One was a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece on Soviet military support to Nicaragua written by Rice University professor of history and S/LPD consultant Lt. Col. John Guilmartin. The professor's polemical prose included this tidbit: "The media have focused on the icing—the MiGs—and missed the fact that a Soviet-style offensive arms cake has been baked beneath our noses." Or at least he may have written that. Miller has said S/LPD staff worked "extensively" on this piece, although he told Buchanan, "Officially, this office had no role in its preparation." Other examples of "white propaganda" listed by Miller were two pro-contra articles—one published by the *New York Times* and the other by the *Washington Post*. S/LPD staffers ghost-wrote these pieces for contra leaders Alfonso Robelo, Adolfo Calero and Arturo Cruz. Mil-



On strike: A Guatemalan textile worker visits with his wife and newborn son.

Guatemalan labor: locked in struggle

GUATEMALA CITY—A chain-mail fence separates Guatemalan wives from their worker husbands. The fence keeps them penned in the factory grounds, while a mother dies or a son is born in their households outside. Inside the fence, a rented private police force makes the Guatemalan Lunafil factory yard more like a prison than a plant occupied by its striking workers.

As the workers of the Lunafil thread factory, 15 miles south of Guatemala City, enter their fifth month of occupying the plant, Guatemala's resurgent labor movement watches. Unionists consider this conflict a key test of the possibilities and limits of labor organizing under President Vinicio Cerezo's Christian Democrat government.

Sensing this, virtually all major labor organizations have given the Lunafil workers donations and moral support. The most significant support has come from the Coca-Cola union, STEGAC, whose members have not forgotten both the national and international support for their successful year-long occupation of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in 1984-85.

The Lunafil occupation began June 9 when owners of the thread factory, responding to increased demand, attempted to shift the plant onto 24-hour operation. The union urged the company to hire more workers. Instead, management imposed mandatory 48-hour work weeks, 12-hour work days and Saturday and Sunday work with no overtime pay. The plant occupation began after 95 percent of the factory's 160 union and non-union

workers rejected the new system and management began to fire those who refused to go along with it.

One month into the strike, the plant manager called all workers to a "negotiating" meeting outside the main building. As he announced that the company was refusing to negotiate, was firing all workers and closing the factory, he simultaneously brought in a force of 30 private security guards armed with rifles and grenades to occupy the main plant building. Up to that time the building had served as the workers' sleeping quarters. The workers continued to occupy the factory yard and two small side buildings.

Access to the plant, originally worker-controlled, is now limited. Once a worker leaves the plant compound, he is denied re-entry. So far, about a fourth of the 100 workers who originally occupied the plant have left, most out of economic necessity. Several families of striking workers have faced eviction for defaulting on rent payments.

For those workers who remain inside, strike-imposed living conditions are a hardship. For shelter, workers are confined to the two small receiving rooms near the gate, forcing some workers to sleep out in the open, where they endured the summer rains. Food must be passed over the 12-foot-high fence by union supporters and family members.

Neither Christian Democrat Labor Minister Catalina Soberanis nor Cerezo have responded to appeals from Guatemala's three major labor federations to help settle the Lunafil dispute. What did have an impact on management was an ad in support of the Lunafil workers published in the Guatema-

lan newspapers by the New York chapter of the Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. In a response to the ad, owners charged U.S. labor with interfering in Guatemalan affairs. But Lunafil union officials think the ad pushed the company back to the negotiating table for the first time since June.

These negotiations eventually led to a Labor Ministry Conciliation Tribunal recommendation that Lunafil pay the workers severance pay and that the workers leave the plant. The recommendation was accepted by management, but not by the union. What happens next is uncertain. Management may simply try to outlast the workers while the case drags through civil courts.

Lunafil workers are mindful that their union has been a survivor in an area hard hit by repression against labor. The scene of major organizing efforts in the '70s, by 1979 there were 18 unions in the area. But by 1984, that number was reduced to six by a campaign of union decimation in which dozens of trade unionists were killed or disappeared. Today Lunafil is one of the area's three surviving unions.

With international eyes on the Lunafil situation, violence in the plant would damage the democratic image the Cerezo government tries so hard to project. On the other hand, if the workers are forced—either by their difficult living situation, by their families' economic needs or by a lack of support from other unions—to give in, the destruction of one more Guatemalan union could signal doom to all the country's workers.

—Elaine Schneider

South Africa: censors swoop and Katharine Graham speaks

JOHANNESBURG—It was a remarkable display of bad timing. The South African government on October 3 took its first step toward imposing prepublication censorship on an opposition paper as prominent U.S. and European journalists gathered in Johannesburg for a conference on press freedom.

Using press restrictions imposed one month ago under South Africa's state of emergency laws, Home Affairs Minister Stoffel Botha gave the Catholic Church-backed *New Nation* newspaper a "first warning"—the initial step in a complex six-week process that could result in either the closure of the paper or enforced prepublication "clearance" of its editorial contents.

The *New Nation*, whose editor Zwelakhe Sisulu has been in detention without trial for 11 of his newspaper's 20 months of existence, is the first paper to receive such a warning.

South Africa already has 100 statutes restricting the right to publish on a wide variety of issues, as well as an additional battery of state-of-emergency regulations that further

limit the media. But Andries Engelbrecht, newly appointed head of Botha's Directorate of Media Relations, said on October 6 that these were inadequate to stem the "revolutionary onslaught" and "abuse of press freedom."

He added, "Anyone who thinks South Africa has developed sufficiently to afford the luxury of absolute freedom of the press must look again at the realities."

Engelbrecht's statements came on the eve of an international conference on "conflict and the press" organized to mark the centenary of South Africa's biggest daily paper, the *Star*. *Washington Post* Chairwoman Katharine Graham gave the keynote address at the conference, which attracted more than 50 foreign delegates, most of them from the U.S. and Great Britain.

Another speaker was Minister Stoffel Botha, the man ultimately responsible for implementing the new censorship laws. He startled delegates by speaking of the "cordial relationship" between South Africa's media and the government. He explained that *New Nation* editor Sisulu was still in detention after almost 300 days because "whether we like it or not, laws exist which enable the government to detain him. These laws exist because it has been decided by the government that they are necessary to maintain law and

order." One delegate said afterward that Botha's gross hypocrisy was the most "truly frightening" aspect of the conference.

A second government speaker, Deputy Information Minister Stoffel van der Merwe, whose responsibilities include control of the government's Bureau for Information, assured the conference, "It may not appear so, but we value press freedom." His bureau is the only legal source of information on anti-apartheid activities.

While the two government speakers were received politely, if skeptically, by delegates to the conference, their presence raised a storm of protest in South Africa's strongly anti-government "alternative" media.

Hours before the conference's October 7 opening, the Southern African Society of Journalists (SASJ), largest of the journalist unions, issued a call to foreign delegates to "remember that most of those who should be here to participate in debates on the free flow of information have been silenced by a government which would have the world believe it is on the road to reform." Foreign delegates should remember this, said the SASJ, particularly when listening to government speakers "pleading that the world should hear their side of the story."

—David Niddrie

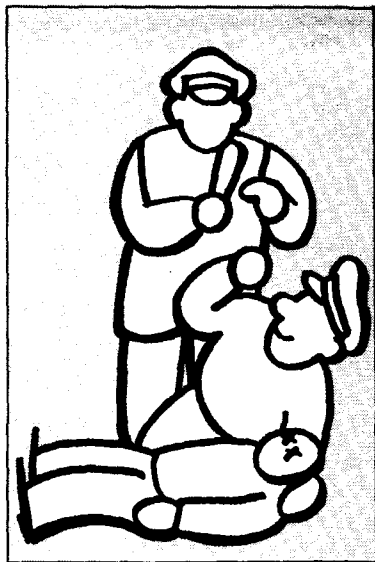
Administration helps the needy: El Salvador police get \$7.2 million

The Reagan administration, thanks to a last-minute effort, has managed to give \$7.2 million in aid to El Salvador's national police. The funding came just before a September 30 deadline after which federal law prohibits further U.S. support of foreign internal security forces.

In late August the White House notified Congress that it was redirecting congressionally-appropriated funds from the Salvadoran military to the national police. During the period that aid to El Salvador's national police was allowed, the administration was required to consult Congress and then demonstrate improvement in El Salvador's human rights situation whenever it wanted to help out that country's national police.

To that end, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Richard Schifter appeared before the House foreign affairs subcommittee just one day before the September 30 deadline.

"El Salvador must find ways to establish and protect civil order, safeguard the population against guerrilla terrorism and, in turn, establish discipline in the security forces so that they do not commit human rights violations in their fight against terrorism and subversion," Schifter said.



But lawmakers opposing the police aid told Schifter that El Salvador's national police have not significantly improved their human rights record and that sending aid would not encourage better law enforcement.

"I think until we see, for example, a first individual brought to justice who has been a member and participant in the death squads, that this is not the time to give additional money," said Rep. Peter Kostmayer (D-PA).

Schifter, however, told the panel about the State Department's "conviction" that no high Salvadoran officials have been involved in politically motivated killings. And he added, "We also have seen no evidence since 1984 of such killings by right-wing death squads."

But you see what you look for. The administration's decision to transfer \$7.2 million to the national

police from \$115 million in military aid appropriated for El Salvador last February comes at a time when reports of civil unrest, political murders and torture in El Salvador are on the increase.

Holly Burkhalter, a representative from Americas Watch, told the subcommittee that since early August in El Salvador a member of an Indian peasant union was shot and killed, the general-secretary of another union was abducted and is still missing and other union members have been jailed for an illegal strike. (Burkhalter also has harsh words for the Salvadoran rebels' indiscriminate use of land-mines.)

Schifter, however, asserted that the Salvadoran legal system is improving slowly, and in some respects is better than the U.S. system. "The rights of the criminal defendant in El Salvador are more extensive than they are in the U.S.," he said.

To which Kostmayer angrily retorted, "There are 500 political prisoners in El Salvador and I just want to know how that squares with your assertion."

In the end, the aid went through. Congress provided the \$7.2 million of riot shields, 36-inch batons, helmets, trucks and radios to help El Salvador's national police keep the peace. It could have been worse. Capitol Hill opposition squelched an administration request for three additional helicopters, 150 shotguns, 2,000 pistols and 30 M-16 rifles with scopes.

—Dennis Bernstein & Peter Shinkle

ler's memorandum to Buchanan concludes: "I will not attempt in the future to keep you posted on all activities since we have too many balls in the air at any one time and since the work of our operation is ensured by our office's keeping a low profile. I merely wanted to give you a flavor of some of the activities that hit our office on any one day and ask that, as you formulate ideas and plans of attack, you give us a heads-up since our office has been crafted to handle the concerns that you have in getting the president's program for the freedom fighters enacted."

Domestic spying

The 10th edition of "Harassment Update" is now out. In its latest report the New York-based Movement Support Network (MSN) lists 90 instances of harassment against Central American refugees and U.S. citizens opposed to the Reagan administration's Central American policy that have occurred between January 1 and September 18. This year's persecution includes accounts of surveillance, break-ins, death threats, abduction, torture (see *In These Times*, July 18) and other actions common to police states. Since MSN began monitoring such activity in 1983 it has recorded 262 "suspicious incidents." About one-fourth of those were break-ins at offices of Central American support groups. In almost all cases the only things stolen were membership lists, computer discs and other forms of information. The most recent was the September 10 theft of the mailing and donor lists belonging to Madre—a New York-based group that provides humanitarian aid to Nicaragua. Individually, the MNS documented cases are disturbing, but taken together they are simply horrific.

Another North connection

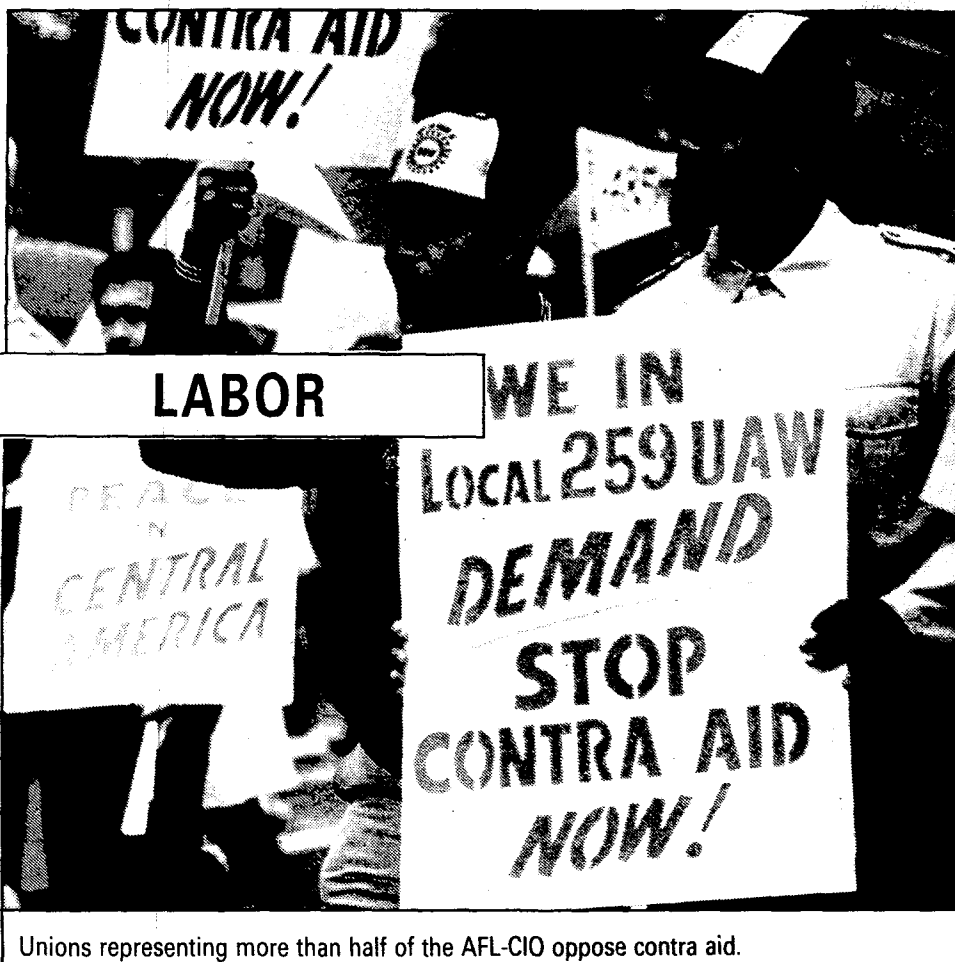
Atlanta police may have uncovered part of Lt. Col. Oliver North's contra supply network in 1984, but then stopped their investigation at North's request. As *In These Times* reported on April 8, a source familiar with the aborted inquiry said that Atlanta's Fulton County Police were investigating links between Overseas Press Service, an Atlanta-based news organization active in Central America, and one ton of C-4 plastic explosives found in an Atlanta warehouse. C-4 is a powerful explosive used by the contras. The source said North personally called police officials and told them to halt the investigation because the C-4 was part of a federal operation. Now, new evidence links North to Overseas Press. The lieutenant colonel's daily schedule for May 21, 1984, reads, "9 a.m.—Walter Gold—room 208—view tape." Ten days later Overseas Press Service was incorporated in Atlanta with Walter Gold as one of the company's directors.

Haitian assassination

Haiti was plunged back into a sea of political violence and chaos last week following the October 13 slaying of a populist presidential candidate by unidentified plainclothes security forces. The next day hordes of angry Haitians took to the streets setting fire to cars and targetting government buildings to express their outrage at the murder of Yves Volle, 53, a leader of the left-oriented Coalition for the Final Struggle. Anne-christine d'Adesky reports that Volle, an outspoken critic of the provisional National Government Council, was gunned down at a rally in front of the Criminal Research headquarters, a shadowy police security unit, as he was denouncing the illegal detention of Haitians. A TV news tape of the shooting taken by *Télé Haïti* was immediately confiscated by police. Volle is the second Haitian political leader to be killed in the last three months. His assassination is viewed by many Haitians as the work of pro-Duvalierist forces seeking to disrupt the November 29 presidential election.

Money-grubbing fingers

C. McClain Haddow is the latest in the long line of corrupt Reagan administration officials to be driven from office. As Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) chief-of-staff Haddow arranged for his wife to be paid for writing speeches for Secretary of HHS Margaret Heckler, but they were never written. He also directed the T. Bear Foundation, an HHS-funded agency that encourages kids to wash their hands. The foundation hired a Washington secretary who did nothing but kick back her paycheck to Haddow—thereby helping the chief-of-staff line his pockets with \$55,000. Haddow recently pleaded guilty to felony conflict-of-interest charges. But the most charming twist to this minor scandal is that Haddow is a former campaign director for Sen. Orrin "Sanctimonious" Hatch (Reactionary-Utah).



LABOR

Unions representing more than half of the AFL-CIO oppose contra aid.

Hot contra debate may trip AFL-CIO's Cold-War stance

By David Moberg

WHEN THE AFL-CIO HELD ITS BIENNIAL convention in Anaheim, Calif., two years ago, delegates witnessed an unprecedented spirited public debate on one of organized labor's most tangled issues: foreign policy.

U.S. policies in Central America brought the issue to a head. The AFL-CIO, through its notorious American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), has been especially active in the region, usually working to support government foreign policy aims. Often collaborating with the CIA, AIFLD has attempted to promote limited unions and peasant associations and to fight leftist parties and unions. But a growing number of big, liberal unions have been critical of both the Reagan administration and much of AIFLD's work in El Salvador and throughout the region.

The contra conflict: The battle will continue at this year's convention in Miami Beach, opening October 26, but it may be limited to the back rooms. Constituent unions disagree on a variety of foreign policy issues with the biggest battle expected over whether the AFL-CIO policy will be to oppose aid to the contras in Nicaragua. Unions representing slightly more than half the AFL-CIO are already on record opposing contra aid. Many of them participated in the large labor contingent at an April Washington demonstration against U.S. policy in Central America and South Africa. These unions have also lobbied against contra aid this fall, both on their own and through grass-roots groups like Countdown '87 and Neighbor to Neighbor.

Only three unions—the Teachers, Bricklayers and Seafarers—officially support contra aid. The AFL-CIO's current policy is

that there can be no military solution in Nicaragua—a stance that is interpreted by both foreign policy factions as victory. President Lane Kirkland, though in no way sympathetic to the Sandinistas, has dyspeptically criticized aid to the contras on the odd grounds that the U.S. always abandons its anti-communist allies.

The Cold-War hawks who dominate the AFL-CIO foreign policy apparatus are clearly on the defensive, but the convention is their turf. Most delegates see it as Kirkland's party, and don't want to spoil the celebration. So the battle will have all the overtones of international diplomatic haggling about nuance of language, as the pro-contra forces try to maintain their position. For example, the AFL-CIO's official draft resolution on foreign policy expresses support for a position taken by a small conservative Nicaraguan union federation supported by the AFL-CIO. The position would link an end to contra aid to the withdrawal of Cuban and Soviet military advisers from Nicaragua—a linkage anathema to liberal unions because they say it is designed to scuttle the peace plan.

Liberal unions would also like to strengthen support for the regional peace plan initiated by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias and drop some gratuitous Sandinista-bashing from the draft. Some liberals were outraged that the draft's brief mention of the Iran-contra affair said the scandal involved only "former" Reagan administration officials. Liberal unions also want to strengthen the resolution on South Africa.

David Dyson, director of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, argues that a number of events have strengthened the liberal unions' hand. The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to Arias, while his plan is gaining momentum both internationally and in

Central America. And leading Democrats are lining up against contra aid.

Many liberals' objections may be negotiable, but the desire to repudiate contra aid will not be easy to fudge. If the issue is not resolved behind closed doors, two state federation resolutions opposing contra aid could precipitate the open debate many leaders want to avoid.

Providing a rationale: Pressure from the left and center has forced the Cold-War labor establishment to accommodate its critics. The tired rhetoric of a '50s mind-set still dominates the AFL-CIO resolution. ("At the center of our world stands the grim reality of a divided Europe," the document asserts early on, making clear the center of the authors' vision, if not the world.) But the draft also pays greater attention to workers' rights, to the self-interest of U.S. workers in raising incomes in poor countries, to the need for international worker solidarity and to criticisms of regimes such as South Korea.

Increasingly the AFL-CIO has tried to justify its foreign policy positions as a uniform defense of the right to free association—including the right to organize unions—that criticizes governments of both the left and right.

Despite the appeal of this theory, there are problems in its application. The National Right to Work Foundation could, for example, easily justify its campaign against union shops on the grounds of "free association." AFL-CIO foreign policy officials still reserve their real zeal for denunciation of leftist governments. For example, the draft resolution, after a weak nod to the Central American peace plan, strongly denounces the Nicaraguan system as a "totalitarianism [that] promises only new forms of enslavement of the people," but says modestly, "to be sure, there are imperfections in El Salvador's democracy." Whatever the failings of the Sandinistas in dealings with unions (see *In These Times*, Sept. 23), union leaders there aren't killed the way they are in El Salvador.

As for the right of association, why has AIFLD twice within a few years worked to start a new labor federation in El Salvador after its former creations turned out to be too critical of President Duarte? "We don't recognize the right of foreign workers to join radical unions," argues Paul Garver, an anti-contra Service Employee official deeply involved in foreign policy issues. "When [AFL-CIO foreign policy architects] talk about 'democracy,' it means allied to the U.S. We don't apply the theory to our own operations. If we only accept foreign unions when they accept our foreign policy, that hardly respects rights of association. And when we criticize state-sponsored unionism, we should look at our own foreign operations that are almost entirely funded with government money," mostly from the Agency for International Development.

"Genuine unions are not...tools...of political parties," the AFL-CIO says. It's a line used to attack decisions of French, Italian or other workers to associate in that way. But neither Israel's Histadrut nor Mexican unions are criticized, even though they are closely tied to political parties. Even China, no model of trade union rights but a "card" to play against the Soviets, escapes criticism most of the time. But Nicaragua is continually assailed. And, of course, many radical unions in the Philippines and other poor countries are routinely written off as illegitimate even

though workers freely choose them.

But there has been some progress. The influence of the United Auto Workers, as well as unions like Clothing and Textiles (ACTWU) and public employees (AFSCME) has made a significant difference, especially on trade and worker-rights issues. "There's still the frantic anti-commie language in the report," one union foreign policy official says, "but the recommendations are much more reasonable. I think it reflects the realization [at AFL-CIO headquarters] that they're in the minority. Overall, I feel the institution is slowly edging toward sanity. It's a glacial movement, but it's important."

Maybe it's worth taking careful note of one of the report's conclusions: "The future does not belong to the tired, stagnant and repressive bureaucracies but to the mass-based democratic movements, in which free trade unions play a central role." Anybody recognize this shoe?

Alternative visions: The labor left has not yet systematically offered an alternative foreign policy vision. When it does, it should be sure it really has a consistent standard and is not tainted by any vestiges of *apologias* for Soviet-style states and their unions. But it should also recognize the possibilities in Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov's reforms, something the AFL-CIO resolutions virtually reject. ACTWU staffer Daniel Cantor and Harvard professor Juliet Schor offer a good start to such a new vision in their new small book from South End Press, *Tunnel Vision: Labor, the World Economy and Central America*.

At the center of the world, they suggest, stands not a divided Europe but "Wall Street Internationalism"—a global regime of free movement of trade, capital and currencies long dominated by U.S. multinationals and banks and buttressed by Cold War anti-Sovietism. Labor, especially its conservative leaders, increasingly became a supporter of this power structure and partial beneficiaries of a postwar social accord.

But the system that led to overseas flight of U.S. capital, a strong dollar, heavy Third World debt and generally low commodity prices is working less and less well for American workers. "The irony is obvious," Cantor and Schor write. "The labor movement helped to create Wall Street Internationalism. Now that system is doing it in. Labor stayed national, while capital went international." U.S. policy in Central America, the authors say, is largely designed to support this system that works against U.S. workers.

There are two political options for the labor movement, argues Dan Gallin, secretary-general of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers. The conservative view divides the world between East and West. The traditional labor view is that the important struggle is not between East and West but "between those below and those above, the exploited and their exploiters, the workers and their enemies," according to Gallin.

In support of that traditional labor view, Cantor and Schor outline nine principles for a new labor foreign policy that stresses international solidarity, acceptance of anti-corporate and socialist ideas, as well as a challenge to corporate power and the free flow of capital. It's a worthy contribution to the rethinking of labor foreign policy already underway. □

By Salim Muwakkil

RALEIGH, N.C.

REV. JESSE JACKSON'S DECISION TO LAUNCH his second presidential campaign from the convention floor of an organization launched by his first one is just the kind of poetic justice the candidate relishes. But it's also evidence that the fervor inspired by Jackson's 1984 candidacy has finally found an organizational home.

The National Rainbow Coalition's (NRC) second convention held here October 9 demonstrated that the group has transcended its sycophantic origins and come of age as an independent organization dedicated to social and economic justice. "It's beginning to dawn on many people that this coalition offers the greatest prospect for this country to fulfill its destiny," said Ron Daniels, the NRC's recently appointed executive director.

Daniels, a seasoned organizer who is well known in black political circles for his work with the National Black Political Assembly in the '70s, was chosen by Jackson to help institutionalize the grass-roots movement. Many coalition members credit Daniels' energy and organizational skills for the group's growing status.

A prison of marginality: During the upcoming political season, Jackson's campaign will be the NRC's major focus. But since the group is registered as a non-profit corporation, legal barriers prevent a direct relationship between the coalition and the campaign. Activities like voter registration drives and political education projects are permissible, however, and Daniels said the coalition has set a goal of registering one million voters by the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday January 29, 1988.

Although the official NRC line stresses that Jackson can be elected, most delegates seemed to view the campaign more as a spur to voter registration and NRC recruitment than as a gilded road to the White House. "Jesse's popularity can help this country's progressive forces break out of the prison of marginality," said Lawrence Hamm, chairman of the NRC's New Jersey chapter. He maintained that any positive changes in the political landscape are directly attributable to Jackson's first run and NRC activity, and he challenged those critics who argue that the Rainbow is merely a vehicle for Jackson to reassess their view to accommodate new political realities.

"It's a dialectic," Hamm added. "We need Jesse and he needs us. He'll really need us if he wins the presidency and tries to implement the peace and freedom programs he enunciates."

The need to separate Jackson's campaign apparatus from the NRC has presented some problems. Many of the group's most able organizers have joined the campaign staff and there have been isolated complaints of emerging turf rivalries. But Daniels insisted that those problems exist more in peoples' minds than in reality.

Economic violence: Jackson's October 10 announcement of his political intentions was shadowed by rumors that the *Atlanta Constitution* was poised to publish a series of articles detailing his alleged extramarital romantic exploits. Several speakers who preceded Jackson on the podium at the announcement urged followers to steel themselves for the expected negative media onslaught. Such rumors are familiar to those who've covered the 46-year-old Baptist minister over the years, but in the current political climate they have become more pronounced. As *In These Times* went to



Although Jesse Jackson has expanded his base of support, he's grown even stronger in the black community.

Pot of gold at end of Jackson's Rainbow?

press, the threatened articles have not yet appeared. Jackson didn't address the rumors in his fiery announcement speech. Instead, he blended radical and mainstream themes into a mix that blurred the difference. Blasting the "economic violence" of Corporate America, he nonetheless affirmed the essential goodness of the country. While condemning the lingering traditions of U.S. racism, Jackson conceded that "only in America" could a black man born of a teenage mother aspire to the nation's highest office.

He issued a strong denunciation of the Reagan administration's foreign policy and accused it of using "a military fig leaf" to cover its weaknesses and lack of vision. "We have the strongest military in the world, but weak leadership. We have guided missiles and misguided leadership. That's why President Reagan invaded Grenada—a nation with 110,000 people and no standing army—when he was really mad at Cuba."

The Jackson Doctrine: He made a strong plea for a non-interventionist foreign policy and outlined a new foreign policy plan he called "the Jackson Doctrine." Its three principles are:

- To strengthen and support the rule of international law, including the role of the International Court of Justice;
- to lend support to the principles of international self-determination and human rights; and
- to lend support for international economic justice.

Nothing earthshaking there. Jackson sounded his favorite themes and did it with the rhetorical flourishes for which he's noted. His speech's most noteworthy aspect was the increased emphasis on drug abuse. Rather than sending mine-sweepers to the Persian Gulf, he proposed more Coast Guard "drug-sweepers" to interdict the flow of drugs into this country. Although he's long been a vocal partisan in the fight against drugs, this new emphasis has the hollow sound of a sop.

But Jackson is reaching out to other constituencies, and his strong anti-drug stance conforms nicely to the "just say no" moralisms that pass for political wisdom these days. What's more, Jackson hasn't perceptively softened any of the left positions that have earned him the everlasting enmity of his many conservative critics.

Evaluating the first run: Jackson's 1984 campaign added two million mostly black and previously disaffected voters to the rolls. His candidacy brought an increased focus on the issue of fairness within the Democrat-

ic Party—certainly influencing Walter Mondale to choose Geraldine Ferraro as a running mate—and he forced the media to give unprecedented attention to issues concerning the Third World and South Africa.

Jackson received 3.2 million primary votes—about 21 percent of the total—and 85 percent of the black vote. He won the

POLITICS

cities of Philadelphia, New York and Washington, D.C., as well as the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia. But those are just statistics. Even more important, but seldom noted, was how Jackson's campaign altered the psychological climate of millions of African-Americans who are trapped in decaying environments and demoralized by the federal government's Reaganomic abandonment.

But Jackson's effort to bring the races together was spectacularly unsuccessful. His fledgling Rainbow remained overwhelmingly monochromatic. Racial tensions were aggravated rather than alleviated. He confused, embarrassed and disappointed many who shared his professed vision of interracial harmony when he allowed the admittedly racist Nation of Islam to participate officially in his campaign. Jackson's reckless rhetoric brought hostilities between blacks and Jews to a new high and he even managed to stir up some class antagonisms within the black community.

This time around a chastened Jackson has widened his political embrace, and although he's learned the various vernaculars of his far-flung constituency, his theme of economic justice is constant. Commentators from across the regional and political spectrum are marveling at the large, non-black crowds Jackson is attracting.

While Jackson has expanded his base of support, he's grown even stronger in the black community. Black politicians who three years ago were reluctant to take a chance on the brash preacher have flocked to Jackson's campaign. So far 18 members of the 23-member Congressional Black Caucus have jumped on the Jackson bandwagon and campaign strategists insist that more will follow. Black mayors, who like Chicago's Harold Washington waited in the wings for political advantages last time, are also falling in behind the country preacher. And according to the latest polls the general black community is more supportive of Jackson than ever before. If he can pull all of this support together, Jackson's predictions of political success in 1988 become

increasingly plausible.

Back to the Rainbow: This convention—dubbed "the first biennial convention"—attracted 641 delegates from 35 states and nearly 1,300 in overall attendance. Although those figures were down from the 800 delegates from 42 states who attended the group's first convention in April 1986, the numbers of states with fully chartered, functioning chapters has grown to 15.

One of the convention's biggest squabbles was over chartering procedures. Although New Jersey was the first state to receive an NRC charter, its delegation also was the most insistent in demanding reforms in the procedure. "We believe that the present procedures for state chartering are too demanding and too cumbersome," read a document the New Jersey delegates presented to the NRC chartering committee. The document included many recommendations that at first sparked acrimonious debate.

"All we wanted to do was facilitate the development of an effective national organization, and we thought our recommendations would aid in that process," said New Jersey State Chairman Hamm. "At first we got a lot of objections, because many people thought we had some kind of agenda. But after the delegates realized that we were attempting to increase the process of democratization, most of those objections disappeared." Most of New Jersey's recommendations were eventually adopted.

But the suspicion of hidden agenda is well-earned. Some members of the NRC also belong to independent political groups with well-delineated ideological lines, and these operatives exploit every opportunity to exert their influence and push their agenda. Since many Rainbow organizers are seasoned veterans of political struggle, they are familiar with the often vicious sectarian battles that took place on the left during much of the '70s. Accordingly, they are especially vigilant for any signs of those self-destructive tendencies arising in the '80s.

Daniels said such suspicions are to be expected. "Many of us find it difficult to cohere with each other," he explained. "The essence of any broad-based coalition is the ability to compromise, and the Rainbow attracts committed, articulate people who tend to think they know everything about progressive struggle. It's very difficult to achieve harmony in such a grouping. That's why progressives have this disturbing tendency to self-destruct. That's also why I say this convention was a truly historic one. We've managed to come out of it in one piece and in good spirits."

By Kathryn Phillips

SAN FRANCISCO

OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, FOR THE first time in a dozen years, the left in San Francisco has a shot at putting one of its candidates in the mayor's seat.

If it succeeds, the election will mark the end of an era of Chamber of Commerce-oriented leadership that began in 1978 after crazed Supervisor Dan White smuggled a pistol into City Hall and murdered liberal Mayor George Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk. If they fail, a boost would be given to a trio of interest groups that threaten the city's soul—downtown high-rise developers who have spent the last decade chipping away at the city's famous low-rise skyline; landlords who oppose the city's rent-control ordinance and most other attempts to preserve affordable housing; and supporters of U.S. Navy plans that would increase the military's presence in San Francisco.

"San Francisco has been an island of sanity while the rest of the country shifted to the right," observed Jim Lansdowne, chairman of the Political Action Committee of the Harvey Milk Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club. Yet over the last decade, under Mayor Dianne Feinstein, the left has watched its influence at City Hall dwindle. Now, if Feinstein's chosen successor is elected, Lansdowne fears that "we may never be able to gain the momentum and strength that the progressive movement once had in this city."

Underdog Agnos: In the polls, Feinstein's choice, Supervisor John Molinari is leading the left's candidate, Democratic Assemblyman Art Agnos. But the margin is so narrow—much slimmer than most would have predicted earlier this year—that a December runoff is nearly guaranteed November 3. Underdog Agnos is a 10-year veteran of the California Assembly. An intelligent, brash, impatient man, Agnos is often compared to Mario Cuomo, as much for his physical appearance as for his approach to politics.

He is regarded as one of the Assembly's most liberal and most effective legislators, willing to push hard and wheel and deal to get what he wants in Sacramento. He has marshalled through important AIDS legislation, including a pioneering bill protecting the confidentiality of people undergoing AIDS antibody testing. He has been a steady proponent of a state law to protect gays and lesbians from job and housing discrimination. Closer to home, he joined the city's progressives and backed Proposition M, a successful measure designed to control development. Agnos also has opposed allowing

Mayoral election gives left new opportunity

the Navy to make San Francisco home for the battleship Missouri and its fleet of escort ships.

The son of Greek immigrants, Agnos, 48, has said he knows what it is to feel like an outsider. Yet he is a product of one of the city's—and state's—most established liberal political machines, whose members have included Philip Burton, George Moscone and current Lt. Gov. Leo McCarthy. He can also

SAN FRANCISCO

count himself among a list of politicians who have, during volatile campaigns, found themselves treating the press to embarrassing revelations. In Agnos' case, the revelations included loans received from a Sacramento developer and delinquent payment of income taxes on profits from a land deal.

Agnos said recently that he felt he had successfully overcome any negative fallout from those revelations. But in the final weeks of the mayoral campaign, Molinari's camp has begun to pounce on the loan and tax issues in campaign literature.

The neighborhood candidate: Molinari, 51, a former Republican who switched to the Democratic Party five years ago, is in many ways Agnos' opposite. In his 16 years on the city's Board of Supervisors—the equivalent of a city council—Molinari has built a strong connection with neighborhood groups, responding quickly to demands for stop signs or more neighborhood recreation programs. But when it comes to larger, ideological issues that shape the future of the city, Molinari sides with developers and the downtown business community. He opposed Proposition M, voted to allow the Navy to dock the *Missouri*, and opposes efforts to further limit landlords' ability to raise rents on recently vacated apartments.

Business and development interests have shown their appreciation for Molinari's support with generous campaign contributions that have helped make this the most expensive mayor's race in the city's history. By late September Molinari had already raised more than \$1 million, about \$180,000 of it from major developers. Agnos had raised nearly \$600,000, about \$60,000 of that from developers.

Whether Agnos will be able to overcome Molinari's money and lead in the polls depends in part on whether a left coalition can deliver the votes. So far Agnos has won endorsements—and volunteers—from key tenants groups, the city's three most influential environmental groups and several ethnic political organizations.

But organized labor has split on the two candidates. The building trades, dependent on construction jobs, generally favor Molinari. Retail workers and restaurant workers favor Agnos. The San Francisco Labor Council avoided a potentially divisive stance and endorsed both candidates.

And the gay and lesbian community, which represents about one-fifth of the city's registered voters, provides the greatest uncertainty. Agnos' leadership in gay rights and related issues should give him a head start in garnering most of the city's estimated 55,000 gay and lesbian voters. But several factors have hampered Agnos' efforts. Some gay activists still resent that in his first race for the Assembly Agnos ran against and beat Harvey Milk. Also, Molinari has carefully cultivated a strong relationship with the gay community, particularly its more affluent members.

Worse yet, for Agnos, one of politics' weirder alliances was formed earlier this

is most visible in the community's political clubs, where both political camps have been fighting hard for endorsement.

The Harvey Milk Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club, arguably the most liberal and influential of the community's three Democratic organizations, bucked club member Britt and came out last spring for Agnos. Meanwhile, membership in the community's two other clubs swelled while supporters from either side joined en masse to participate in the clubs' endorsement votes this summer and fall.

Among the new members was one prominent lobbyist for a downtown developer. He is, by all reports, an acknowledged heterosexual. By the time votes were taken at the two clubs, said one Agnos campaign staffer, straight club members probably outnumbered gays.

In the end, one club endorsed Molinari and the other made no endorsement after neither candidate could win the 60 percent needed.

For Britt, endorsement of Molinari has proved embarrassing on at least one occasion. In August, as Britt eloquently argued at a Board of Supervisors meeting against home porting of the *Missouri*, Molinari proposed softening a city requirement that the Navy not discriminate against gays and lesbians. The suggestion infuriated Britt, who by then had already endorsed Molinari.

"I think it's going to really be a problem for Britt to win for supervisor next year," says Tish Pearlman, a lesbian political activist and political action committee chairwoman for the National Organization for Women's San Francisco chapter, which endorsed Agnos. "Harry's really going to be in trouble if Molinari doesn't win."

Yet others say Britt's endorsement will have little effect on his political future.

"Harry has the best political base because he's been consistently working on rent control," said Ben Gardiner, a gay political activist and Molinari supporter.

Agnos believes Britt's action hasn't hurt his mayoral campaign. "I don't believe he represents what the gay community feels about my contribution to it," Agnos says. In fact, said the assemblyman, Britt has played virtually no role at all in determining the outcome of this critical mayor's race. For now, said Agnos, Britt has been "politically neutered."

But if Molinari wins, the left in San Francisco could find itself politically neutered as well.

Kathryn Phillips is *In These Times'* correspondent in California.

The labor movement and gay community are split between liberal Art Agnos and pro-development John Molinari.

year. Harry Britt, the openly gay member of the Board of Supervisors, who is also a member of Democratic Socialists of America and generally regarded as a strong left voice on the board, endorsed Molinari for mayor in exchange for his support in Britt's unsuccessful bid for Congress last spring.

Gay split: Since then, the gay and lesbian community has been split between Molinari/Britt backers and Agnos backers. That split

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By Anne-christine d'Adesky

WASHINGTON

PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF the recent national march on Washington for gay rights was the internal shift that has taken place within the gay community and given rise to unprecedented activity. While the sheer number of marchers—more than 500,000—is an impressive political feat, even more important is the strong gay identity and sense of commitment individuals have developed.

The last gay march on Washington was held Oct. 14, 1979, exactly eight years ago, but light-years away from today in terms of the reigning social and political climate. In the spring of 1977, when the first march was being planned, former San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk was still alive, and Ronald Reagan was viewed as an anomalous curiosity by almost everybody except the extreme right.

What has transpired since his election can legitimately be characterized as an all-out assault on the disenfranchised—minorities, women, gays, immigrants. Add to that the particular devastation AIDS has wrought on the gay male community, and the homophobia it has engendered even within seemingly progressive circles. Only then does the import of the national march take on its true meaning, as a signal both of the emergence of a more unified and organized gay community, and of its integration into the broader civil rights movement.

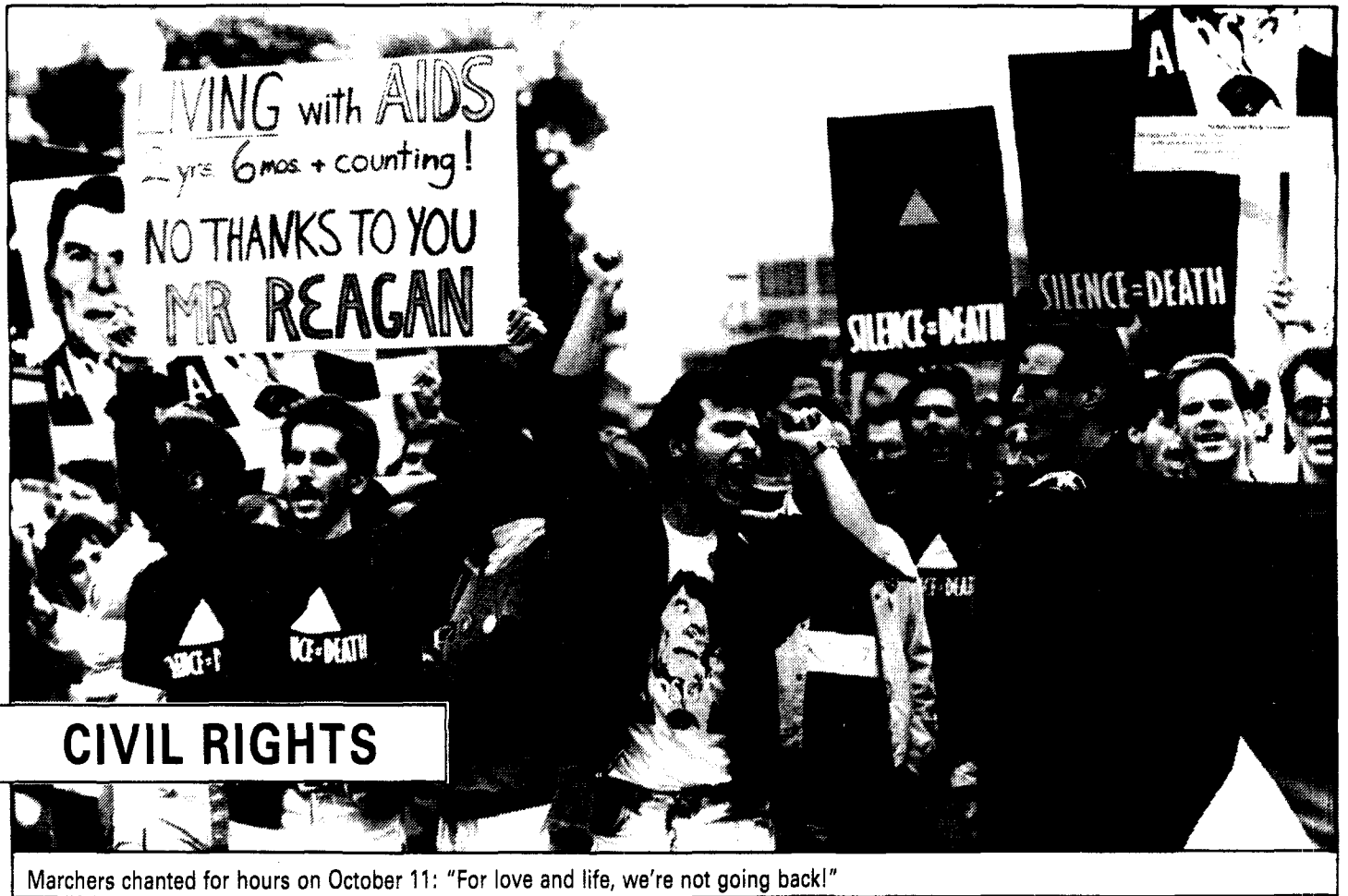
Why march? Just as it is difficult to pinpoint the moment when an emotion gives way to action, it's impossible to select a single catalyst for the October 11 gay march. Some marchers interviewed thought it was the slow-to-surface realization among gay men and lesbians that although AIDS does not discriminate, there is no such thing as impassive neutrality when it comes to the National Institutes of Health, where scientists appear to be playing power politics around AIDS.

That's the view of marcher Chuck G. of Los Angeles, who said, "I never considered myself an activist until now, but AIDS has made me political. As a gay man, my life is on the line and hard as it is to accept, I know I have to fight like hell because no one, except for other gay people, is going to help me."

The proposal for a national march came from the 1979 march organizers, who saw the signs of severe discontent and a need to unite within different gay communities. Only 16 days before the first planning meeting on July 17, 1986, the gay community was dealt a heavy blow when the Supreme Court upheld a Georgia state sodomy law. The law was not new, but the message from the highest court in the country was: homosexual behavior is a crime (*Hardwick vs. Bowers*), even if it occurs in one's bedroom.

From that moment on, spontaneous demonstrations became *de rigueur* for hosts of gay people who no longer believed that the closet would save them from AIDS, Attorney General Edwin Meese or any of the dozens of local and state laws cropping up from the offices of panicked public officials. There was also the shift in the course of AIDS, which the general public could no longer hold at bay by claiming it affected only homosexuals. By the time AIDS and heterosexuals were associated on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*, many straight individuals were familiar with service organizations like Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City. For the first

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Marchers chanted for hours on October 11: "For love and life, we're not going back!"

CIVIL RIGHTS

Gay and lesbian march signals new credibility of rights movement

time, homosexual leaders were sought out by the major media for their opinions on ethics, science and public policy. Around AIDS, gays had gained credibility.

Lessons learned: There are other lessons, too, about compassion, death-and-dying issues, the failure of the private health-care system and insurance, homelessness, housing; areas where gay men and lesbians have organized sophisticated and humane alternatives to deal with AIDS that are emerging as model solutions to problems. The black and Hispanic communities now recognize the common threat AIDS poses to their members—gay, IV drug users, homeless

The October 11 national march on Washington for gay rights demonstrated not only the emergence of a more unified and organized gay community, but also its integration into the broader civil rights movement.

mothers, teenagers—and its connection with seven years of Reagan cutbacks in services to minorities.

Finally, there is the general coming apart of the Reagan administration and the imperious righteousness of the Moral Majority, from Ollie North to Jim and Tammy Bakker.

There are other elements in the march's success story, a powerful one being the collective need to mourn the thousands who

died before the community had time to respond. Several marchers compared the procession to an ideal wake—the kind where relatives and friends are brought together to recall the life of the deceased, and the impact that person had on the world. A wake where the spirit of the deceased and the living merge, where humor and love mingle with grief.

It is no coincidence that a massive gay wedding took place the day before the march, or that a giant memorial quilt for those who died of AIDS was unveiled at dawn on October 11. Both events reflect a maturity and desire for ritual and tradition that is new in the gay community, and stems from powerful emotions that death and loss wrest forth: love of self, of community, of culture.

And pride. A pride that was noticeable among marchers, even veteran activists who felt a renewed connection to the intangible notion of what it means to be a gay man or a lesbian. "We're not afraid anymore," said one marching lesbian. "We're not afraid of each other and we're not afraid of them. That is what has changed."

Nor do "they" appear as afraid of gays. "They" now include non-gays: bisexuals, straights, parents, public officials, supporters. This year a bisexual contingent had its own banner, a new community "coming out." Mainstream newspapers ran editorials encouraging heterosexuals to attend the march, while the official march poster proclaimed, "Gay or not, it's time to speak out!"

"How can you consider yourself a progressive person and support homophobia?" asked Scott, a heterosexual engineer who declined to give his last name. "You can't. It's the same thing with AIDS and other issues. You do yourself a disservice by pretending it's somebody else's problem when it really is yours. Gay rights is mine. AIDS is mine. South Africa is mine," Scott summed

up with a smile.

Common ground: Rev. Jesse Jackson, a speaker at the post-march rally, hammered home the same point. "We are here on common ground," said Jackson, referring to all the displaced people in America—gay men, lesbians, blacks, autoworkers, farmers. "This generation must fight, but let's fight the right fight and not each other," he added.

March organizers estimated that 840 gay activists were arrested October 13 in a mass civil disobedience action at the U.S. Supreme Court. More than 4,000 supporters—parents, straight friends, lovers—watched and cheered as wave after human wave was dragged away by police, some wearing gloves. Groups of persons with AIDS (PWAs) were among the arrested. As *In These Times* went to press, many of the arrested had refused to pay the \$100 bail and had chosen to remain in jail in solidarity with the many prisoners with AIDS in the U.S.

Gay marchers demanded, among other things, a gay civil rights bill, an end to sodomy laws and state and federal laws that discriminate against PWAs and those at risk (or perceived at risk) for the illness, and an immediate increase in federal funding for AIDS education, research and treatments. Whether or to what extent they will achieve these goals depends on their continued commitment to fight an administration that has shown little sign of backing down from its anti-gay agenda. It also depends on the now quickly shifting political climate and the ability of the left to unite.

One thing is clear: the gay community has come into its own as a powerful and integrated part of the civil rights movement. As gays chanted for hours on October 11: "For love and life, we're not going back." □

Anne-christine d'Adesky is a New York-based freelance journalist who has covered AIDS since 1984.

THE WAR WINDS DOWN

With the Central American peace pact's November 7 deadline only two weeks away, the world is watching Nicaragua. Oscar Arias' plan promises a separate peace for Nicaraguans wearied by a seven-year war that has claimed more than 43,000 lives. But the cost of that peace is high: the pact binds the government to make sweeping policy changes in just three months time.

This *In These Times* special section charts the Nicaraguan government's progress on reforms that we consider significant: Atlantic coast autonomy, the cease-fire and contra amnesty. It also looks at the role of the peace process in Washington's contra aid battle and reports on the contra war's paradoxical impact on Nicaraguan politics.

By Jim Naureckas

AID TO THE CONTRAS IS ALL BUT DOOMED, researchers and congressional sources say. The key factor is the ongoing peace process in Central America, which undercuts the White House's argument that the contras are crucial to a negotiated settlement in Latin America. Said Margaret Swedish of the Religious Task Force on Central America, which lobbies against contra aid, "It's hard to imagine military aid being voted as long as the peace process continues."

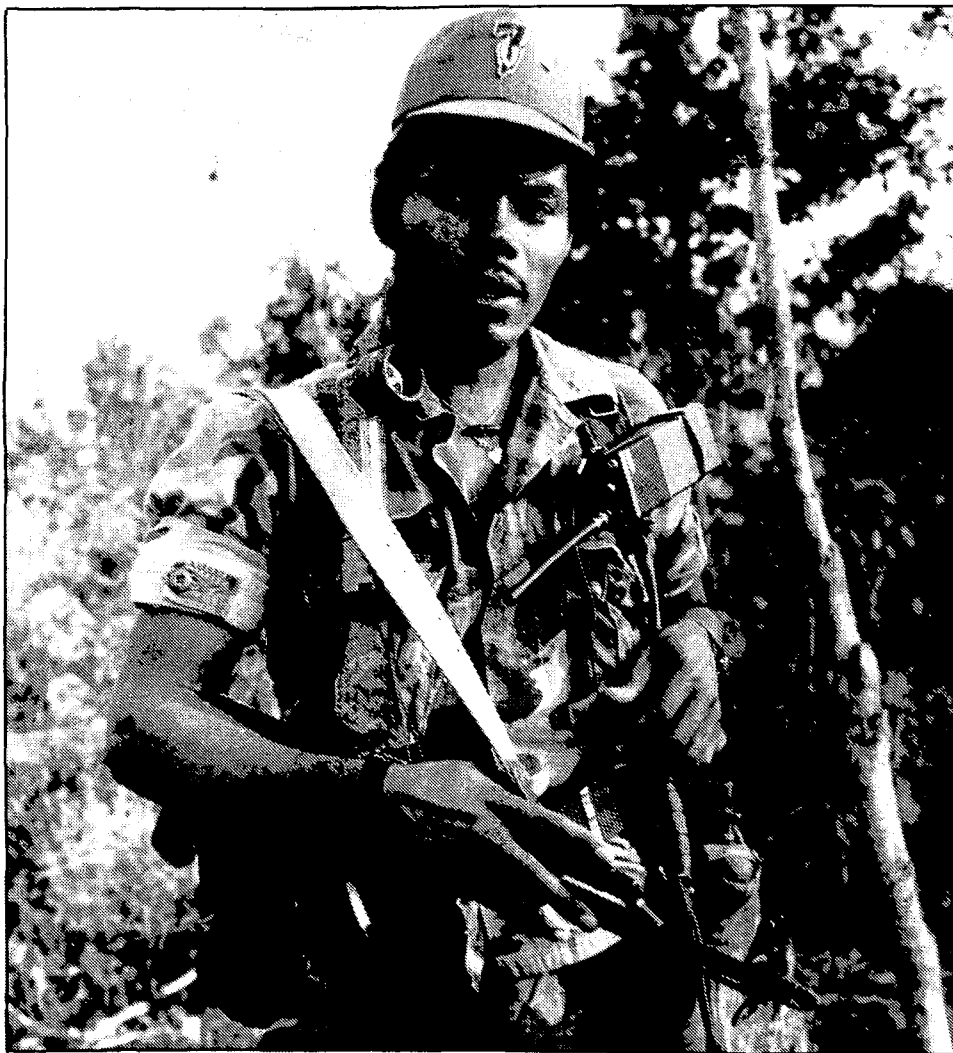
Her feeling is shared even by some fervent contra supporters. An aide to Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC), calling the Reagan administration's recent management of the contra issue a "complete unmitigated disaster," predicted that the "Freedom Fighter Sell-Out Plan" would convince a majority in Congress to cut off the contras.

"There is a growing consensus on Capitol Hill that the contras in Nicaragua have suffered a strategic defeat," said Segundo Mercado-Llorens, an analyst for the Coalition for a New Foreign Policy. The contras' lack of military success is compounded by the new peace accord, which would eliminate the contras as a military force.

President Reagan, however, has refused to give up his dream of overthrowing Nicaragua's government. "As long as there is breath in my body, I will speak and work, strive and struggle, for the cause of the Nicaraguan freedom fighters," Reagan told the Organization of American States on October 7. As a practical demonstration of this support, the White House has indicated that it will request \$270 million for the contras, probably soon after the November 7 deadline the plan sets for all its provisions, including a cutoff of outside support for insurgents.

The administration supports the peace accord, but has decided to continue to support the contras as an "insurance policy," deputy White House spokesman Dan Howard told *In These Times*. "The Sandinista track record on making good on promises does not bolster one's confidence," Howard said. He also cited the Sandinistas' unwillingness to negotiate directly with the contras as an accord violation that justifies continued contra support.

Peace pact may mean defeat for contra aid



"Freedom Fighter Sell-Out Plan": even contra supporters expect aid to end.

But Costa Rica's ambassador to the United Nations, Carlos Jose Gutierrez, told *In These Times*, "We don't consider it necessary to have face to face negotiations between the contras and the Sandinistas." He suggested that go-betweens, such as Nicaragua's Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, could help negotiate a cease-fire. Gutierrez, reiterating his government's opposition to renewed contra aid, stressed that "the peace plan needs room to develop."

The accord mandates only that govern-

ments take "all the necessary steps for achieving an effective cease-fire within the constitutional framework." It does not say that a cease-fire has to be achieved, or that any sort of negotiations must take place with armed insurgents.

No gravy for Thanksgiving: The White House must introduce its request soon after November 7 if it wants Congress to vote before the Thanksgiving recess. Current aid runs out November 10—it would have expired in October, but Congress agreed to

give the contras \$3.5 million in "humanitarian" aid to keep them going until the peace accord takes effect. This Democratic compromise worried some anti-contra organizers, but, said John Burstein of the liberal Washington Office on Latin America, "A battle then would have taken emphasis away from the peace plan." In any case, the contras are believed to have saved enough aid to last at least until the end of the year.

"It has never seemed less likely that the administration will get what it wants," said Larry Birns, director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, which has opposed Reagan's policies on Latin America. Birns said that contra aid is now "a Republican position, not a bipartisan position." Democratic leaders have adopted the theme of "keeping the peace process going," including following the accord's request to cut off the contras.

The Nobel Peace Prize awarded October 13 to Costa Rican President Oscar Arias "has to be seen as another body-blow against the administration," said Birns. The prestige of the award, given for Arias' role in formulating the peace accord, "makes it much more perilous for the administration to try to derail the accord," Birns said.

If contra aid is defeated, the Reagan administration has several fall-back options. One is to put aid in an escrow account to be used only if the administration finds Nicaragua is violating the accord. Critics believe that this finding would be inevitable, given Reagan's animosity toward the Sandinistas. Reagan could also request non-lethal aid, or a reduced amount. But according to observers, Democratic leaders are working for a flat cut-off, with the possible exception of aid to resettle contra fighters in civilian life.

There's already been a dry run of the contra aid fight in the Senate. When Jesse Helms tried to attach an amendment giving the contras \$310 million to the State Department authorization bill in September it was defeated 61-31. Many senators said they voted against it because they felt they should wait and see what happens in Central America by the peace accord's deadline. That shows Congress is taking peace seriously, which may be a first in the long contra war. □

Final paradox: contras aid Sandinistas

By Joe Foweraker

MANAGUA

IN THE DUSTY BACKSTREETS BEHIND ONE of the main roads into this city, a small procession follows a battered American truck as it lumbers down the dirt road. People talk quietly as they accompany the simple coffin of a young man lying in the old truck. The contras have killed again.

The same weekend the beautiful central plaza of Granada in the west is alive with color and music. Thousands of young people crowd under the sweeping palms to play and dance in honor of their patron saint. They stand in sun and shade, sucking on sweetened ice in plastic bags.

The road back to Managua is a bone-breaker, the thousand potholes a testament to the economy's rapid decline. And as countryside merges slowly into city, delapidated cars careen past depots full of broken-down buses belching fumes into the lines of waiting hitch-hikers.

The economy is suffering most from the massive hemorrhage of the war, with govern-

ment mismanagement and the growth of government bureaucracy doing little to staunch the bleeding. The population is hardly "economically active," and production is falling. A distorted and ambiguous price structure encourages parasitic forms of speculation and petty commerce. Far from being a "Soviet beachhead" in the Americas, Nicaragua is simply a tiny and impoverished country deeply imbued with the kind of capitalist ethic that is constantly sharpened by inflation and scarcity.

Support despite adversity: But in political terms it is something else. And this is proven by remarkable historical circumstances: drastic drops of 80-90 percent in real wage levels (coupled with hikes in unemployment and other hard indicators of economic malaise) are accompanied by continuing widespread and active popular support for the government, and real popular affection for government leaders.

Since that support is hard to measure, such statements may be contested by those who choose not to see it. But close compari-

son with other countries of the continent also in economic crisis—Mexico and Peru—leaves little doubt that the good spirits and self-esteem observable in the Nicaraguan people result from an open society, where opinion is expressed relatively freely. There is no fear of the police and much less of the army. The Sandinista leadership's political record is far from perfect, but it is surprisingly good for a country engaged in a war of survival.

Paradoxically, it is the war, more than anything else, that has shaped the trajectory of Sandinista rule and created its popular content. The war, and the long years of continuous alerts against a U.S. invasion, have required not only militarization but also a broader-based mobilization of military reserves and popular militias, civil defense and neighborhood vigilance, and the coffee harvests and the defense of rural cooperatives. This, along with popular organization and representation, means that the vast majority of young Nicaraguans have a collective ex-

Continued on page 22

By David R. Dye

QUILALI, NICARAGUA

ATOWN OF 7,500 PEOPLE, QUILALI IS SET in the rugged, majestic hills of Nicaragua's Nueva Segovia province near the Honduran border. Not far from the town is El Chipote, the hill that served as Augusto Sandino's headquarters during much of the resistance to the U.S. Marines in the '30s. Now the region is

WINDS DOWN

again the setting of an important chapter in the country's history.

The Nicaraguan government has designated an oval-shaped area stretching some 22 miles north of town as one of the four cease-fire zones in the attempt to end the contra war (see accompanying story). Under the unilateral cease-fire, which went into effect on October 7 as part of the Central American peace agreement, the Nicaraguan government is promising to pull its troops out of the zones for at least 30 days.

Sandinista Army Maj. William Montalban, the 26-year-old military chief of the zone, pointed to a detailed map of the region during a visit of a small group of journalists early this month. Montalban explained that his troops, some 2,500 strong, had regrouped at three "concentration points" around the perimeter of the zone. Some 150 to 200 contras were thought to be inside the area, which has some 2,000 inhabitants.

Montalban said his forces were ready to repel any contra attacks on civilians during the cease-fire. "If they want to talk peace, we'll talk," he said. "But if they want to fight, we're waiting."

The dream of tranquility: The day the cease-fire went into effect, there were no signs of contras or army troops in the cease-fire zone—just peasants. In Nicaraguan terms, they were well-off peasants—stubbornly individualistic frontier farmers who have in the past given the contras support. The Quilali zone has been chosen for the cease-fire experiment partly because a lot of contras come from the area.

But the dominant mood among these war-weary people was hopefully expectant.

"For us the cease-fire is good," said a farmer, "because it will end all this iniquity and allow us to live in tranquility."

Miguel Bellorin, an aging corn farmer, summed up his feelings in typically pithy language. "For us, the cease-fire is good," he said, "because it will end all this iniquity and allow us to work in tranquility."

When other local peasants were asked, "If you had relatives with the contras, would you ask them to take amnesty?" a consensus opinion emerged. Before the contras can be expected to lay down their arms, the peasants claimed, the government should free locals accused of collaborating with the reb-



Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo: Catholic Church hierarchs want a cease-fire that would follow negotiations with the contras.

A chance for peace: life in a cease-fire

els. According to the peasants, many local people are in jail unjustly, having done nothing more than give the contras food to avoid trouble.

But Carlos Manuel Morales, Sandinista political chief and governor of the region, made it clear he didn't believe the people were in jail simply because they had given the contras food. Nevertheless, he said, "We are going to take any and all actions that aid in

achieving peace. If one of those is to free prisoners, after a review of their legal situation, we will do it."

The war of wills: Morales acknowledged that a rapid laying down of arms cannot be expected in the region because it will take time to build up confidence in the cease-fire process. The Sandinistas, he indicated, are willing to wait. Even if the rebels do not quickly return, Morales said, the cease-fire

will have had an important impact: "All the people here will be supporting peace, the non-Sandinistas included."

This, it appears, is what the government is banking on most heavily—winning the contest between the peasants' desire to return to living tranquil lives and the contras' waning will to fight.

David R. Dye is a doctoral candidate at Stanford University living in Managua.

In Nicaragua's battle over the regional peace pact, it's church vs. state

The Nicaraguan government's September 22 announcement of a unilateral cease-fire with the contras has touched off the country's latest political battle over implementation of the Central American peace pact. The main contestants once again are the revolutionary government and the Nicaraguan right, led by the country's Catholic bishops.

The government insists that the October 7 cease-fire's objective—which was to last 30 days—was only to induce insurgent troops to accept amnesty called for in the peace pact (see story on page 12). But church hierarchs, echoing a Reagan administration demand, have stated a strong preference for a cease-fire that would follow high-level negotiations with the armed contra leadership.

Observers feel that one church motive is to pose a condition—contra dialogue—that the government will never accept, in order to create an impasse and then blame the Sandinistas for not being serious about peace. Alternatively, the church hierarchy may think it can pressure the government into a negotiation that raises the contras' political status and allows the right to extract concessions from the government. Either option could help the contras obtain more aid from the U.S. Congress.

In support of the same effort, the church is pressing to control 150-odd

municipal peace commissions that have sprung up in Nicaragua's war zones. The commissions are composed of local notables who have agreed to try to persuade wavering contra fighters to put down their weapons and accept the government's amnesty offer. Although the government has played a role in setting up these bodies, many appear to have no Sandinista members.

For the bishops, the peace commissions are a clear danger. If the local groups succeed, the right's demand for contra dialogue falls of its own weight. The church hierarchy has criticized the local commissions for seeking "only the surrender of isolated individuals"—and has demanded that both these and higher-level regional commissions "subordinate themselves" to the National Reconciliation Commission headed by Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo.

Displaying political tact, the government has acceded to this demand. But although the local commissions may be formally under the cardinal's thumb, local political dynamics will govern their work. Ivan Kaufman, a prominent merchant and member of the regional commission in the northern city of Esteli, put it this way: "The National Reconciliation Commission can make whatever plans it wants from its offices in Managua, but we're the ones who are in touch with what's hap-

pening in the localities."

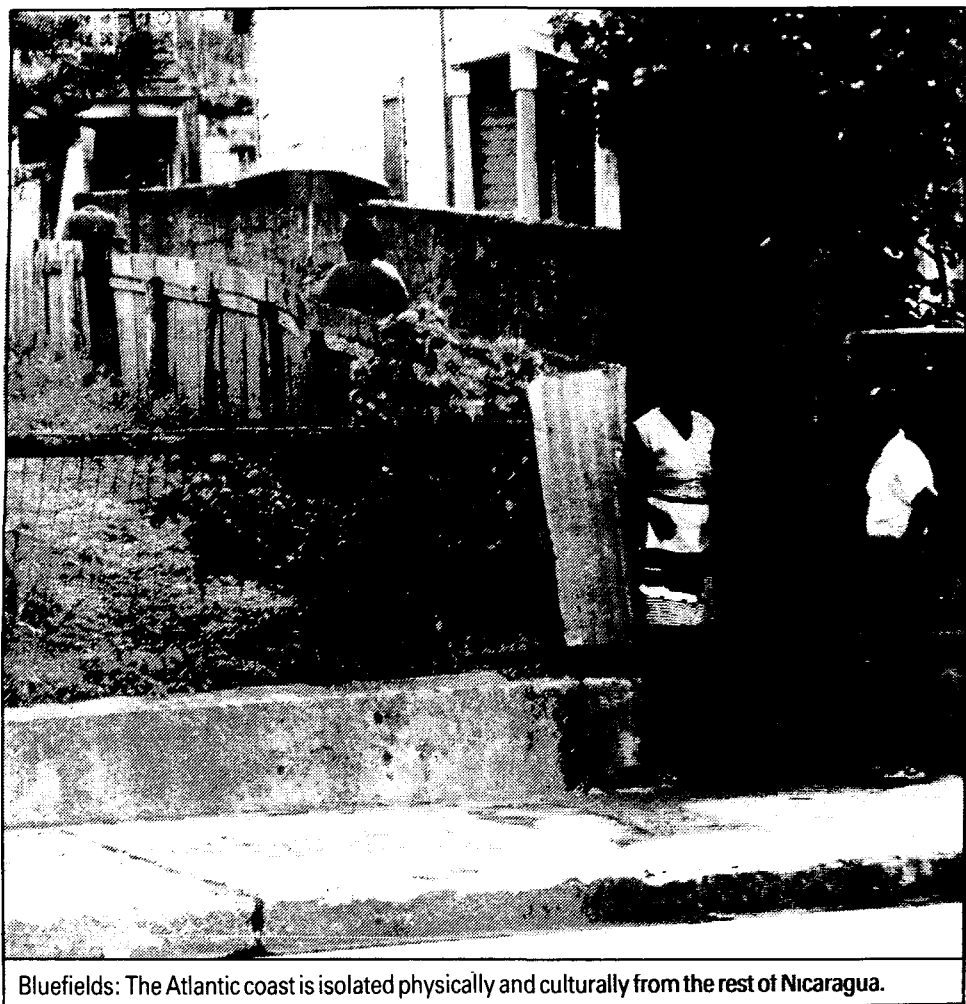
Those dynamics are likely to work against the bishops' attempts to smother the Sandinista cease-fire. At the same time, the government has been moving ahead with other provisions of the peace accord.

This month Managua began a dialogue with the "unarmed internal opposition." It quickly became an occasion for political sparring. Three of the 11 groups initially in attendance—all members of the right-wing alliance called the Democratic Coordinator—quickly walked out, insisting they were underrepresented in the talks.

The opposition newspaper *La Prensa*—which the government recently allowed to reopen—has been claiming that the Coordinator parties are the "real opposition" to the Sandinistas, and that their withdrawal invalidates the dialogue. If the Coordinator—which did not participate in the last elections—is the real opposition, it is a weak one. A recent rally in the southern city of Masaya fizzled.

Six political parties that did contest power electorally with the Sandinistas in 1984, winning a third of the vote, are participating in the dialogue. And observers here feel that the Sandinistas are continuing steps toward fulfillment of the peace accord, depriving the Reagan administration, one by one, of its pretexts for further contra aid.

—D.R.D.



Bluefields: The Atlantic coast is isolated physically and culturally from the rest of Nicaragua.

Putting autonomy into practice on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast

By Eric Bates

BLUEFIELDS, NICARAGUA

A MALIA DICKSON CUNNINGHAM USED TO hate the Sandinista government. Like other Miskito Indians, she saw the new leaders of Nicaragua as Spanish-speaking invaders from the western half of the country trying to impose their will on her people.

The Sandinistas forced thousands of Miskitos from their homes along the Atlantic coast and marched them to relocation camps. Every time someone spoke up, the Sandinistas called him a contra. Many Miskitos resisted, and Cunningham watched as family and friends took up arms to fight for their rights.

That was five years ago, in the early days of the Nicaraguan revolution. Today Cunningham helps lead the struggle to protect her culture and bring democracy to her region—but these days, she works for the government.

Cunningham is the director of the National Autonomy Commission, a state organization that has been working for two years to establish a regional government on the Atlantic coast. If all goes according to plan, coastal residents will go to the polls early next year to elect representatives to an autonomous council empowered to decide regional issues.

"The Sandinistas are giving us a chance to govern ourselves," Cunningham said. "They have admitted that they made mistakes and now they are trying something new. This government is actually *giving up power*. They are going to allow Indians and ethnic minorities to elect their own leaders and make their own decisions. I have never heard of any government doing that."

The autonomy plan is not the first attempt the government has made to give more power to the coast people. When the Sandinistas led a popular revolt that overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza eight years ago,

they moved quickly to incorporate the region into the new government. Those initial efforts ran into the centuries-old distrust between the eastern and western regions of the country.

History of distrust: Nicaragua is, in effect, two separate countries. The Atlantic coast region covers the entire eastern half of the nation, but it is separated from the west by a steep mountain range, a dense tropical rainforest and 300 years of cultural indifference.

The British ruled the coast until 1894, when they left the region in the hands of U.S. corporations that dictated economic life with the support of the Marines. Many residents still speak English and celebrate British traditions like the May Pole. Indeed, the sense of separation from the rest of the country is so acute that it is not uncommon to hear residents in the Caribbean port city of Bluefields ask travellers heading for Managua, "Are you going to Nicaragua?"

The Sandinistas underestimated this level

The Sandinistas "have admitted they made mistakes," says one local official. "This government is actually giving up power."

of distrust when they moved to include the Atlantic coast in national affairs in 1979, and the miscalculation proved disastrous. Within a year, government efforts to organize the region sparked public protests, and the racism and brutality of government troops flown in from Managua only made matters worse.

"Stereotypes came up," recalls Michael Grey-Sloan, director of the Independent Atlantic Coast Research Center. "The troops called black people monkeys. Even today,

people here remember the insults more than the brutality. I think that was the turning point for the coast. Whatever little participation there was died."

The Sandinistas also fueled hostilities when they moved to relocate thousands of Miskitos living along the Rio Coco River. Although the move was designed to protect citizens from U.S.-financed attacks in the northeast, many Miskitos fled to join the contras. Before long, 30,000 refugees had made their way across the border to Honduras.

Finally, after discussions with Indian leaders, the government acknowledged its mistakes and began autonomy talks in the hope of restoring calm and encouraging Miskitos to return to their homes. Now autonomy plans are nearing completion.

The plan is simple enough. Coastal residents will elect representatives to a regional council, and all six ethnic groups on the coast will be guaranteed seats. The council will decide regional issues—including the use of coast resources like lumber and minerals. The central government in Managua will retain control over national issues, such as defense, taxation and trade.

There is evidence that the move toward autonomy has already begun to defuse explosive tensions. Most Spanish-speaking officials on the coast have been replaced by local leaders, and local elections have already been held in nine communities.

In addition, more than 12,000 Miskitos have returned from Honduras, and with the establishment of a United Nations airfield on the border, another 300 Indians are returning to their homes every month.

And the most recent sign that the autonomy plan is winning support came on September 30 when a coalition representing every coastal group fighting the government announced its readiness to negotiate a cease-fire. Brooklyn Rivera, a leader of the coalition, said family and church members have asked those in the coalition to lay down their weapons and support the regional peace plan signed in Guatemala in August. The coalition includes Steadman Fagoth, a Miskito Indian and former national guardsman known for his alliance with the U.S.-backed contras.

Problems ahead: But despite such successes, the autonomy project still faces some serious stumbling blocks on the coast, and chief among them is widespread resistance to the draft. Although levels of military service have increased this year following a policy change that allows young men to serve their mandatory two years near their homes, many teenagers continue to run away rather than join the army.

"A lot of guys get out of the country when it was time for them to serve," said Victor Gonzalez, a student who recently completed his service. "They go to join Mr. Reagan and the contra, or they just go to get away."

Off the coast on the Great Corn Island, 16-year-old Mario Bradford said many of his friends continue to evade the draft. "Fifteen service boys run away last week. They run to Colombia because they no want to serve. If you don't serve, the government come sudden and take you away, and your mother no know where you is."

Another obstacle to national unity is the lack of adequate transportation between the two coasts. Last year contras destroyed the ferry that links Bluefields to inland cities to the west. The repaired ferry was back in operation this past spring, but the 240-mile trip to Managua remains a grueling 14-hour expedition by bus and boat.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to au-

tonomy, however, is distrust and suspicion among coastal residents. Although the proposed law has been widely publicized, with door-to-door visits by officials and classroom lessons, many in Bluefields doubt that autonomy will become reality. "Autonomy is nothing but candy for the people," said

THE WAR WINDS DOWN

Fran Lopez, a shoemaker. "We don't need words—we need food. We don't have anything to eat."

Food shortages on the coast have fed deep-seated resentment of the government. Although coastal researchers say scarcity can actually be traced to the U.S. corporations that plundered coastal resources without investing in public development, some residents here still long for the Corn Flakes and Coca-Cola once available in company stores.

Halstead Adolphus Wilson Burger clutched a bottle of rum and shouted angrily about the scarcity. "When the United States was here, we had everything! Now we got nothing! We can't get nothing to eat! We are

By Clare Foster

EL CUA, NICARAGUA

O N AUGUST 27 LOCAL NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT officials called a town meeting in El Cua, in the country's northern war zone, to explain and discuss the August 7 Central American peace accord.

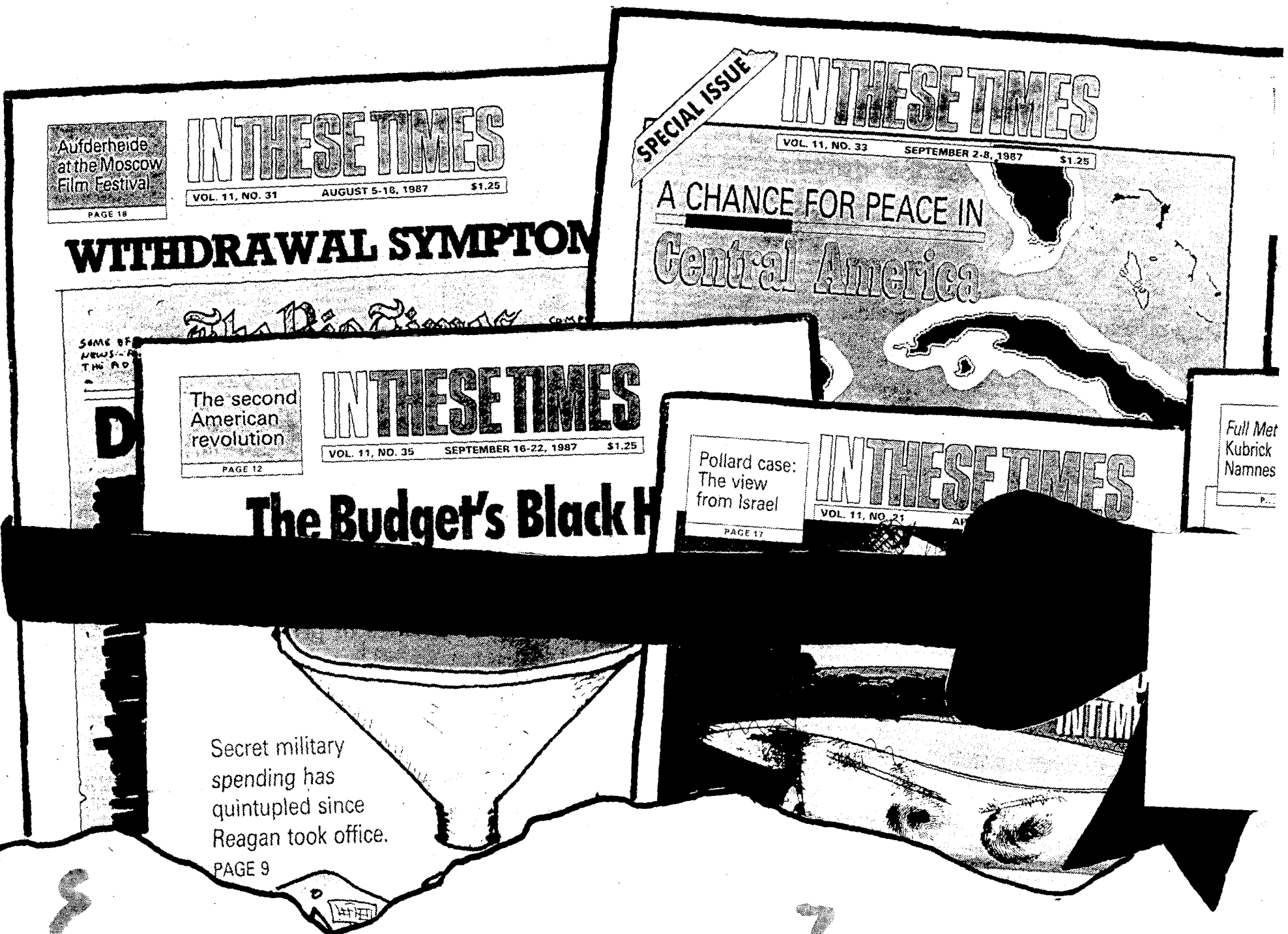
In the front row sat five contras who had turned themselves in three days before. The *desalzados*—literally, "those who have put down the arms they took up"—were examples in the flesh of the meeting's key message: persuade the contras to come home.

It remains to be seen whether the influx of contra combatants to their home communities will be enough to dismantle the contras from below, but this is what the Nicaraguan government hopes to achieve. For the Sandinistas, the provision of amnesty required by the peace accord means extending and publicizing an amnesty already in effect since December 1983.

Coming home: Before the accord, more than 9,000 people were processed under the amnesty law, according to the Nicaraguan government. Of these, 90 percent were Miskito Indians. Two years ago on the Atlantic coast, thousands of Miskito fighters began to return home (see accompanying story). Many continued in their military role, with the same guns and sometimes even the same uniforms, defending the settlements instead of attacking them. The Sandinistas are hoping to apply the Atlantic coast formula to Nicaragua's northern and central regions.

Instead of relocating returned contras to new areas, the plan now is to use local reconciliation commissions (see story on page 11) and family ties to pull them home to their original communities. It's a tactic that worked well among the Miskitos.

Family members are being encouraged to visit contra relatives across the Honduran border. Recently announced cease-fires are meant to allow local peace commissions to



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suffering in our own country! We are starving in our own country! We want the United States back! We want Somoza back!"

Even some supporters of the autonomy plan are critical of details of the proposal. Faran Dometz, the second-highest officer in the large and powerful Moravian Church of Nicaragua, helped draft the proposed law. He called the plan "too weak," saying it does not give the region enough legislative power and fails to ensure adequate representation of small minority groups such as the Rama Indians, who number fewer than 650.

"We're not going to romanticize this and say autonomy is going to solve all our problems, because many of our people don't believe it," he said. "We're going to have to see what happens and struggle to make autonomy meaningful. We have a lot of beautiful words on paper, but let's come down now and put it into practice."

The fate of autonomy: The road ahead may prove slow going, considering the skepticism of many coast residents. Some, like Daniel Gonzalez, a university professor and native of Bluefields, said the success of autonomy will depend on teaching people what it means. "Ultimately, the success of autonomy will depend on education," he said. "For autonomy to succeed, the people must learn how to take responsibility for their own lives."

For others, like Grey-Sloan, the fate of autonomy will depend on how it affects the economy. "Take the woman who bakes bread for a living," he explained. "It's not going to



A fishing boat docked off Bluefields. Experts say economic conditions will have much to do with the success of the region's autonomy plan.

be easier for her to bake bread if she goes to a Sandinista defense committee meeting. She's going to waste time, and when she gets home she'll still have to bake her bread. People see it in very practical terms. If the autonomous government can make a difference in the material conditions of the lives of people here, they will support it. That is what will determine the success of au-

tonomy."

Whatever the outcome, autonomy has already sparked interest around the world. American Indian leaders and other international observers have praised the Nicaraguan plan and say they are considering its use as a model for their countries.

"Autonomy is the only example of its kind in Latin America," Grey-Sloan observed. "No

other country has ever granted self-determination to Indians and ethnic minorities. Indigenous people from other countries have already said that this is going to serve as an example for them. Autonomy will serve to help other nations solve the problems of ethnic minorities."

Eric Bates is a freelance writer who recently returned from Nicaragua.



A funeral in El Cau, Nicaragua, this year for two militiamen killed by the contras.

Amnesty: contras come home

go out and explain the amnesty to the contras in person. The government wants to ease fears in the contra ranks that returning rebels will be killed. It also hopes to woo mid-level *commandantes* by offering them political influence at home—even the right to form their own political parties.

The contras' Washington, D.C., office claimed the number of *desalzados* is "zero." Perhaps the Washington view is that someone who deserts can never have been a real contra in the first place. But the contras coming back in El Cua were no converts. Far from being Sandinista-lovers, they were cooperative but icy.

The response of the community to these newcomers was uncertain. The men stared, the women turned away, children clustered, unbelieving. Some of the little ones had been born since these men left the village.

The contras were the center of attention at the El Cua meeting for a practical reason. Sandinista security depends on everyone

knowing who they are. The amnesty procedure here consists of two days of debriefing with state security followed by presentation in some form or other to the public, immediately after which they are free to go. The following day one of the contras at El Cua went off to the fields on a horse with his machete and bucket.

Reason to leave: Unpaid and ill-trained, the contra foot soldiers' motivation has always been distinct from that of their military and political leaders. The first question you ask any *desalzado* is why he went.

Often his family had connections with the previous regime. Perhaps the family lost a lot of money—almost everyone in Nicaragua has. Or there was a cousin in prison, a contra brother killed. In 1984 the imposition of compulsory military service produced a wave of contra recruits. And then there's propaganda, always effective in areas with heavy illiteracy.

Many contras seem to have joined the reb-

els simply because it was what their friends were doing. "The contras got there before the Sandinistas," as one journalist put it. But a majority of *desalzados* were taken by force. Their growing numbers testify to the importance of kidnapping in contra recruitment.

Answers from ex-contras about their motives are usually vague. Raoul Rizo Castillo was silent when asked why he joined.

"Did you perhaps have relatives in the contra?"

"No, I went alone."

"Why do you think most people go?"

"Some are kidnapped, some *enganado*, misled. They said they were going to win. They were very confident. But they still haven't won anything."

The returning contras are more willing to talk about things such as the name of their *commandante* and task force, the number of expeditions they went on, what training was like, how many blond foreigners they saw. They feel these are safer subjects.

Yet in the front row at El Cua former contra Roberto Alonzo was not daunted. After the suggestion that the contras form their own political party he stood up and said: "First of all, I must tell you that we are lovers of peace. What I want to know is, the amnesty is very nice for me, but will it include the release of political prisoners?" The local Sandinista representative tried to explain the difference between someone who has committed acts punishable under criminal law—such as torture and murder—and someone who just got swept along in the flow because they were misled. He said the government planned to release the latter group.

Reasons to return: The second question you ask a *desalzado* is why he came back. Perhaps most significant is what is referred to in Nicaragua as the "strategic and military defeat" of the contra forces. They have been routed in conventional military terms. Contra morale is very low. The strength of the current Sandinista position lies in the fact

that they have both carrot and stick. They promise defeat and at the same time offer a way out.

Another factor is the population's shifted allegiance. Behind most early contra peasant recruits was a nourishing background of anti-Sandinista relatives and friends. But in response to growing contra strength the Sandinistas made development in the war zones a priority. The northern town of San Jose de Bocay, for example, was a smattering of huts in 1981. Since then, like most rural towns it has mushroomed with people displaced by the war. They meet in groups, they get educated, they join unions.

The contras have deliberately targetted these benefits in an attempt to negate their political impact. But six years of this has meant that even those peasants who never suffered from Somoza's national guard have now experienced concrete suffering from the contras.

At the same time the Sandinistas have learned to become more sensitive to the peasants' ways. Children aren't taught so much about Sandinista martyr Carlos Fonseca at school now. Farmers can get a private plot in the agrarian reform. But under the conditions of an integrated 1984 defense program, those who were given land were also given guns. The need for self-defense has forced even the crustiest hardliners, if not to participate, then at least to care.

To the extent that the Sandinistas have successfully transformed the motivation of previous contra supporters and fighters, the contras' return to their homes is a kind of victory. As American volunteer Mira Brown put it: "When the Sandinistas talk about getting people out of the contra, they are not talking about a physical process of removing people. They are talking about a political process of changing people. Their faith in people's capacity to change is immense."

Clare Foster is producing a film about U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

EDITORIAL



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The South will rise again—but differently this time

"An expanded Democratic Party," Jesse Jackson said in a speech formally announcing his presidential candidacy last week (see page 7), "is the reason Robert Bork will soon become a trivia question instead of a threat to the basic rights that most Americans hold to be precious." Jackson was referring to the mass of black voters registered in the South as a result of his efforts that began four years ago. And he was correct. In large part Bork has been defeated by the crop of new senators, especially those from the South, whose margins of victory came from solid black support.

This new electoral force is also the basis of Jackson's commanding lead at this point in the 1988 presidential race. With polls giving him 19 percent nationwide and 27 percent in the South, Jackson is leading Gov. Michael S. Dukakis of Massachusetts by 6 percent and the rest of the Democratic field by 11 percent. But in narrowly electoral terms this strength is also Jackson's weakness. While he is supported by 10 percent of the whites polled—putting him sec-

ond after Dukakis—he is also widely unpopular among many sectors of the white vote, making it unlikely that he will win the nomination next summer.

Even so, Jackson has accomplished more than any other Democratic Party leader in bringing new ideas into the arena of public debate, and in creating new possibilities for a viable left politics. This is particularly true in the South, which—as Jackson pointed out in his announcement speech—could now become the locus of a politics that "will change the priorities of our nation."

This is now a real possibility because in many Southern states a liberal candidate who gets 80 percent of the black vote will need only 35 percent of the white vote to win Democratic Party nomination—and not much more to be elected. So far, the whites who have been elected by black votes have been seen by black voters simply as the lesser of two evils. Less conservative than their opponents, they are not much different from their predecessors. But it is now possible to elect a new kind of politician from the South. With concerted effort by those on the left committed to moving our nation beyond its current impasse, the South could be transformed from a bastion of conservatism to a leader of liberalism. If this happens, it will in large part be the result of Jesse Jackson's efforts. ■

Arias' Nobel Prize adds to administration woes

Costa Rican President Oscar Arias has been a thorn in the Reagan administration's side ever since it became apparent that he was serious about peace in Central America. His winning the Nobel Peace Prize last week did not help the administration, which has lost control of its Central American policy and is reduced to a desperate game of catch-up. Its strategy now—if it can be dignified with that word—is to hope publicly that the peace process won't work, so that the U.S. can resume its aggression against Nicaragua.

The day after the prize was announced, Arias commented that he hoped the amnesty in El Salvador and Nicaragua will be "as broad as possible, covering the largest number of political prisoners." This expression of doubt was seized on by administration officials, who promptly announced that they are basing their latest strategy on the expectation that Nicaragua will not negotiate a cease-fire with the contras.

A glimmer of hope for the administration exists in Arias' suggestion that Cardinal Obando y Bravo act as intermediary between Nicaragua and the contra leaders. Nicaraguan government leaders

have agreed to negotiate with contra commanders in the field, but they have steadfastly refused to negotiate with top rebel leaders, claiming this insurgency was created, led and sustained by the United States. To end it, Nicaragua insists, negotiations must take place between the principals. This is, of course, exactly what the U.S. administration does not want. It would be a tacit admission that unlike the wars in Guatemala and El Salvador, the Nicaraguan war is entirely the creation of an alien power—the Reagan administration.

But this is the reality, and it is also the reason that the regional peace plan was adopted by the five presidents of Central America. Four of those five are opposed to the Sandinista revolution and fear its success, which could be a powerful political force for revolutionary change in their own countries. But they do not fear Nicaraguan aggression. And given the poor condition of Nicaragua's economy, the likelihood that the Sandinista revolution will serve as a model for others in the region any time soon is slight. The danger from continued war and from a beefed-up U.S. military presence in Honduras is much more troublesome to the other nations. The regional peace pact was an implicit declaration of independence by Central America. It was not an endorsement of Sandinista rule. But it was a practical recognition that the Nicaraguan revolution has survived, and that if it is to fail it will have to be as a result of its own mistakes. The prospects of that seem increasingly remote. ■

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"...with liberty and justice for all"

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LETTERS

Treaty surrogate

YOUR EDITORIAL ON THE RECENT SENATE VOTES in favor of preserving the ABM Treaty (Sept. 30) was right on target. As you pointed out, the vote was important for two reasons. First, the ABM Treaty is the cornerstone of nuclear arms control; without restrictions on defensive forces neither side will agree to restrict offenses. But even more important, it makes clear that the Senate will not sit idly by as the Reagan administration unilaterally "reinterprets" a treaty out of existence.

But the editorial contains a minor error. You state that this is "the first time the Senate has ever imposed an arms control restriction on a president." This overlooks a little-known but important victory for arms control advocates: the three-year ASAT moratorium. Anti-satellite weapons, or ASATs, threaten vital communications and intelligence satellites—the very means used to verify arms control agreements and provide early warning of an attack. Although both sides have primitive ASATs, these obsolete weapons pose little threat to today's satellites. However, the Air Force wants to develop and test a new ASAT. In 1985 Congress cut off funds for further U.S. ASAT tests as long as the Soviets do not test an ASAT; they have refrained from testing ASATs since 1982. Each year since, Congress has renewed this moratorium. Neither side had conducted enough tests prior to the moratorium to complete development of a new ASAT.

This example of congressionally-mandated arms control proves that restrictions on U.S. actions can limit Soviet actions. Neither side would benefit from an anti-satellite arms race. The administration has refused to negotiate an ASAT treaty with the Soviets, but Congress has effectively frozen both sides' technology in place. The lesson extends to other, more far-reaching arms control arenas, such as nuclear testing and flight-testing of ballistic missiles.

Mike Kelly
Associate Director
Illinois Nuclear Weapons Freeze

Ollie the human

JEFFREY RUBIN'S "A LESSON LEARNED ABOUT America..." (Viewpoint, Sept. 2) wisely counsels us not to forsake the many serious lessons associated with Lt. Col. Ollie North's rise to (now somewhat diminished) popularity. In an extended analysis of North, I think one finds a contemporary Rorschach of the dominant political culture in the U.S., one in which the powers of media packaging and post-Vietnam psychology weigh heavily.

But first a respectful challenge to Rubin's views about the U.S. and its proclivity to "treat its own citizens so well." Under Reagan, countless U.S. citizens are being cast aside (look at the homeless, the growing mass of the impoverished and the gentrification of our cities, for starters).

Regarding the North phenomenon, one of the reasons the public was far less astute in determining his guilt—as compared to a jury—is alienation; North became a media icon far removed from the courtroom. Additionally, as I believe many of us across the political spectrum feel estranged from the machinery of governmental power, the

Lt. Col. symbolized the rare individual able and willing to slice through the bureaucratic maze for a cause he obviously believes right. As such, North embodied an integrity, however perverse, that contrasts with the standard fare coming from politicians.

This humanized him. And let us not forget Zbigniew Brzezinski's prediction in 1968 about the force of "magnetic and attractive personalities effectively exploiting the latest communication techniques to manipulate emotions and control reason."

North's unchallenged terminology about the contras as "the democratic resistance" and his anti-communism also conformed to fairly accepted worldviews, especially among the hearing committee members. And, as Jean Elshtain noted, Oliver North "was the beneficiary of the collective perception of the Viet vet who suffered in Vietnam, suffered upon returning and is now being 'thrown to the wolves.'" But she also reminds us that Vietnam produced an "alternative legacy" applicable to other U.S. interventions: Never again! Our future may in large part be determined by how well we can articulate this alternative.

R. Jay Allain
Northampton, Mass.

Personal worst

AS THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS PROGRESS, IT seems that every candidate has to bare his past sex life. Using standards of Judeo-Christian ethics, a few candidates have fallen a bit short of perfect, in that conception occurred previous to the wedding and reception.

If all candidates must suffer this invasion into their private lives, in all fairness we should also be informed of the complete family history of President Reagan. When was his and Nancy's first offspring born, and what was the date of their wedding? I'm confident that you have the means to gather this information, and you would be doing the public and your newspaper a great service to print it.

Early in Reagan's first term I heard a radio talkmaster make the statement that it was common knowledge in Great Britain that Nancy was four months pregnant when she and Ronald were wed, but that the media in this country had not seen fit to publish that fact since it was taboo to print or televise anything to blight the image of the Great Communicator. This is pure heresy, and I have not heard or read anything of that nature since, so I definitely will not regard it as truth.

If you can ascertain that it is true, it would

only be fair to all the candidates to make it public. This would not be gossip-mongering in the style of the tabloids so readily available at the grocery check-out counters.

Walter A. Reeves
Wilmington, Ohio

Editor's note: Turnabout is fair play, but we have no interest in the private lives of public figures. Media attention on this is a reflection of the paucity of serious discussion about our public policies, domestic and foreign, and also a reflection on the superficiality of the candidates who have suffered so far.

Don't criticize friends

YOU SHOWED VERY POOR JUDGMENT BY SENSATIONALIZING your "exposé" of Mayor Andrew Young's agreement to train Guatemalan police (ITT, Oct. 7). The article concedes that there is (a) a case for improvement in Guatemala under President Vinicio Cerezo and that (b) Atlanta police may well have some respect for human rights to impart. Andy Young is *not* the enemy of progress. Why alienate him and his admirers?

Helen Travis
San Pedro, Calif.

Erosion

PERHAPS IT COMES FROM LIVING IN NEW ENGLAND, but I place considerable weight on social developments emanating from Great Britain. Thus it was with great interest that I examined Pat Aufderheide's superb movie

review, "Love in the ruins: laying foundations" (ITT, Oct. 7).

And while squatters and roving rioters are not common in these parts (a campus sit-in is big news!), I do find abundant the dismaying signs of spiritual and psychological dislocation she finds in the film.

Should we not consider these disturbing trends in the U.K. as a dire warning for us here? I say this not to play doomsayer but rather to encourage us to acknowledge this unspoken malaise so that we might better grapple with it. As it is now, the rare activists and clergy and social workers who confront this human carnage on a daily basis are often on the verge of exhaustion and burnout.

While I love a brilliant foreign film (and Aufderheide's penetrating review certainly suggests this one is), I think we should adopt Brecht's maxim and not find release and enjoyment through this, but a warning about the gradual and almost imperceptible erosion of the personal quality of our lives. And taking a cue from the liberation theologians, social criticism can be a large part of our analysis. This can help us remove the onus from the individual and confront the social structures and attitudes that produce dehumanization.

Erin McCaffrey
Amherst, Mass.

Correction

A photograph on page three of the September 30 issue of *In These Times* was incorrectly accredited. The credit should have read "Marvin Collins/Impact Visuals."

EXPERIENCE HISTORIC NICARAGUA

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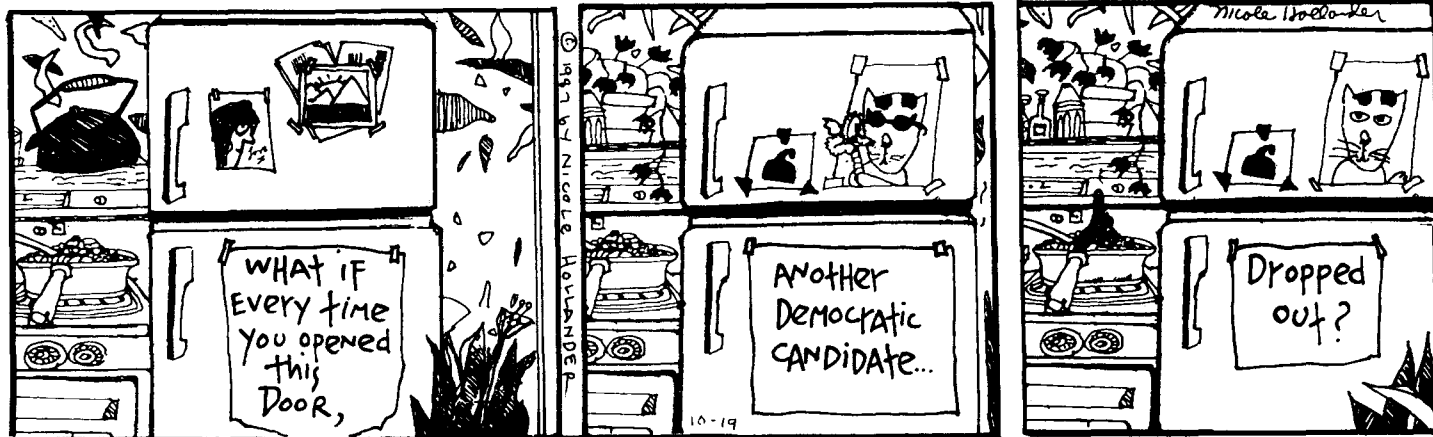
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SYLVIA



International Year of the Homeless runs aground on Reagan policy

By Marjorie Hope and James Young

WHEN THE UNITED NATIONS PROCLAIMED 1987 as International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH), the U.S. representative declared his enthusiastic support. To spearhead this country's participation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) decided to honor 166 American projects demonstrating ways of improving the "shelter and neighborhoods of low-income families through local initiatives involving the private sector." HUD Secretary Samuel Pierce hoped that these programs would serve as models to other nations.

Yet when IYSH had completed a film on its work, the U.S. Mission to the U.N. forced the deletion of scenes portraying America's homeless and efforts to help them. They did so, the mission declared, because the film distorted reality. No other Western country was portrayed and it did not include what a spokesman called "the individual rights element of American homelessness"—that some homeless people prefer to stay on the streets. The mission told the U.N. that these objections were made "for their own good."

The United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (Habitat), which sponsors IYSH 1987, understood. On receiving a letter from the Union of the Homeless describing concern over the film's deletions, Habitat wrote to New York City authorities dealing with terrorism. The next day the "terrorists" received a series of calls demanding to know what this "union" was.

This pressure achieved its immediate purpose, but it also served to publicize the protest and in the end it simply reinforced what many people from all over the world already knew: two to three million people in the world's richest nation are blessed with the liberty to protest—and to live on the streets—but not with a place to live.

What's real? A U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) official has declared that "homelessness and substandard housing is [sic] universal." Glossy brochures announce HUD's intentions to launch a media campaign, sponsor a major national conference and encourage the private sector to sponsor demonstration programs. A special brochure is devoted to award-winning programs.

Yet none of these demonstration projects was portrayed in the film. Rebecca Reich, a spokesperson for Urban Homesteaders, one of the groups shown in the film, declared she was "perplexed." Her group, she said, was involved in activities that "exemplify the values that the U.S. Mission would like to promote, pulling yourself up by your own bootstrap."

Equally perplexing is the decision not to profile the efforts of Trevor Ferrell, the young boy who spends his after-school hours working with Philadelphia's homeless. His dedication earned him an award and a pat on the head from President Reagan—but not inclusion in the film.

As the National Coalition for the Home-

less points out, a large number of HUD award projects are limited in their ability to serve low-income people. Many focus on providing services through traditional avenues of charity. Many are not replicable. Nor has HUD offered them any subsidies.

But some are well worth a long look. For example, Burlington Community Land Trust, one of 14 to merit a special award, provides low-income people with access to home ownership and creates a permanent housing stock for the community. By maintaining resale restrictions on its long-term land lease agreements, and by holding the land in trust, the corporation assures affordability for all future owners. HUD mentions that this project—which became a non-profit in 1984—was initially developed and funded by the city. But, of course, it does not add that since 1981 Burlington has been governed by socialist Mayor Bernie Sanders.

Ideology vs. reality. The U.S. theme is "Housing America: Freeing the Spirit of Enterprise"—a message evidently intended to enlighten the masses abroad. Yet if HUD policy-makers studied their own special merit award projects to determine the ingredients of success, they would make some interesting discoveries.

First, like the Burlington Community Land Trust, almost all rely heavily, though not exclusively, on government funding. The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program seems to be the main federal source. Most draw on some combination of federal, state and local monies. Second, you can involve people at the grass roots when they are building their own homes rather than emergency shelters (a point constantly made by the Union of the Homeless).

Sounds pretty basic. Yet the Reagan administration has cut appropriations for the CDBG in half, and for public housing, by more than 60 percent. As for domiciling the Americans already homeless, a look at what happens in Washington, D.C., reveals our society's fixation with shelters. When federal assistance is finally granted, most is in the form of funds for soup lines and barracks-like accommodations.

World-wide problem: HUD policy-makers are even more reluctant to examine the international and political dimensions of the problem. To cite only a few, the stock of affordable housing is dwindling all over the world, but not because entrepreneurial spirit among the poor is dwindling. Some factors are peculiar to each country, but it is clear that many of the same social forces that create the potential for homelessness are universally at work. In London, Venice, Lusaka, Dubrovnik, Rio de Janeiro and dozens of other cities, growing numbers of second and third homes stand empty, but not far away roofless people huddle in the streets or double up with relatives in crowded quarters.

Real estate, including empty houses, has become a prime investment. Housing is used to maximize profits, not serve human beings. Moreover, the landed and proper-

ties tend to stay together, neighborhoods to be well-kept. Some authorities have come to recognize squatters as a social asset.

IYSH experience in the Third World and elsewhere has also shown that few people are willing to invest sustained energy in a self-help project unless they have a reasonable assurance that they will not be displaced. Some governments grant freehold; some accord long leasehold; others try to evade this vexing political issue.

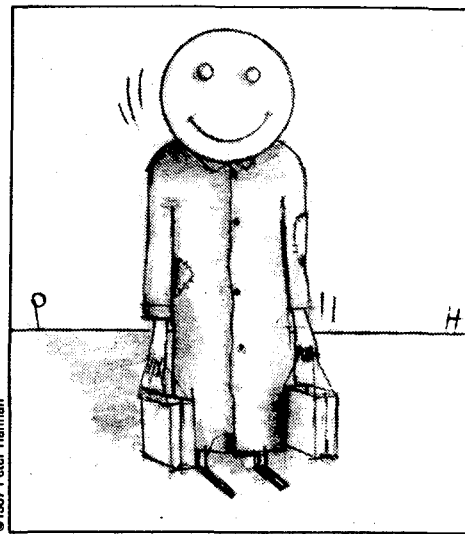
Political tact: IYSH officials seem well aware of political dimensions, and at the same time hesitant to discuss them openly. In a telegram to HUD, IYSH Director Ingrid Munro congratulated the U.S. for its "freeing the spirit of enterprise" theme, but tactfully pointed out that a close cooperation between government and private action was of fundamental importance. In many countries housing was a cornerstone in the social welfare policy. She hoped that domestic U.S. activities within the IYSH framework would not only show new ways of improving living conditions but also new ways in which housing can contribute to economic development.

IYSH is performing a useful function by spotlighting successful projects. They demonstrate ways in which people can build their own homes (especially when regular market channels are circumvented), how communities can meet their energy needs from alternative sources, how low-cost housing schemes can generate income for residents, how appropriate technology taps human inventiveness.

But in the end, meaningful strategies cannot be based on model housing and neighborhood projects. They need to be built on policies that confront social inequities and deal with them on a political level.

Most of the conferences celebrating the International Year are likely to skirt this fundamental issue, but they cannot fail to stimulate thinking about it.

Marjorie Hope and James Young are associate professors of sociology at Wilmington College of Ohio. They are authors of *The Faces of Homelessness*.



©1987 Peter Hannan

The administration's theme is "Housing America: Freeing the Spirit of Enterprise."

cept the new population. Some also supplement the settlers' efforts to upgrade their shanties by providing some material, training, roads, water, community facilities—even jobs. As their dwellings improve, squatters reciprocate by paying taxes. Fam-

U.S., Latin homeless groups go own ways

October 6, the International Day of Shelter for the Homeless, was commemorated by two actions at the United Nations. The National Union of the Homeless convened a tribunal to air the experiences of Americans living on the streets and in shelters. A few blocks away, the Continental Front of Community Organizations—representing 14 Latin American countries—and the October 6 Coalition of the U.S. homeless advocates, squatters, housing and peace groups, marched through mid-Manhattan chanting "People united will never be defeated!" At Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza they demonstrated in two languages for housing and better living conditions.

The panel of judges—which included political scientist Frances Fox Piven and National Low Income Housing Coalition founder Cushing Dolbeare—heard a series of American homeless witnesses recount their slide from middle-class security to grim survival. Describing humiliating confrontations with welfare

workers and abuse—including rape and extortion—they had suffered in shelters, the witnesses' message was clear: "Shelters are hell. We want real housing, and real jobs!"

The 40 Latin visitors did not demonstrate. They spent most of their time in discussions about organizing with their U.S. counterparts. Gradually it became clear that the Latin American perception of homelessness and its victims is different from that prevalent in the U.S. There, government repression is more overt and poverty far more widespread. Welfare benefits are much lower, but applicants are not subjected to demeaning interrogations and rules. Organizers seek to politicize the poor by clarifying the power structure and its complexities.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Mission to the U.N. said they were unaware of these activities—and of the fact that October 6 had been designated International Day of Shelter for the Homeless.

—M.H. & J.Y.

Israeli anti-nuclear movement stagnates

By David Newdorf

IT HAS BEEN A FRUSTRATING 12 MONTHS for Israel's small group of anti-nuclear activists. On the one hand, the disclosures of a former nuclear research technician and his subsequent cloak-and-dagger abduction splashed Israel's secret nuclear program onto the front pages of the international and domestic press. But in Israel the publicity failed to create a groundswell of opposition to nuclear weapons.

It has been a year since Mordechai Vanunu, a 32-year-old former technician at the Dimona nuclear reactor, sold his story to the London *Sunday Times*. The story confirmed what military analysts had already known and written about: At its facility in the Negev Desert, Israel has probably built 100 to 200 nuclear weapons. Although the smallest member of the nuclear club in terms of size and population, its arsenal ranks sixth after the U.S., Soviet Union, England, France and China.

Vanunu is now being tried behind the closed doors of a Jerusalem courtroom for espionage. The government has stuck to its thin denial, the wording of which hasn't changed in the last 10 years: "Israel will not be the first nation to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East."

Despite its media attention and much to the dismay of a handful of core activists, anti-nuclear sentiment among the public is negligible compared to the anti-nuclear movements of the U.S., Europe, Australia and New Zealand. The anti-nuclear movement has had so little effect on the Israeli government and media that the issue today is not whether Israel should have nuclear weapons, but whether the country's nuclear policy should be open for public debate.

The government's position, backed up by press censorship and secrecy, is that the topic does not belong on the public agenda.

The Labor Party, the liberal partner in the left-right government coalition, supports the government position and opposes a general discussion of the nuclear issue. "It is not open and it should not be an open debate," says Israel Gat, chief of the international policy section of the Labor Party. "Anything that has to do with security should be discussed in the Security and Defense Committee of the parliament"—that is, behind closed doors.

Small opposition parties such as the socialist Mapam Party and the Progressive List for Peace have called unsuccessfully for an open debate in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, which has not publicly discussed Israel's nuclear capability nor questioned the government's denials. Any discussion so far would have been in the Security and Defense Committee, and even leftist members of the committee refused to comment on or off the record. "If the leak were traced back to us, it would be very bad politically," said one leftist party spokesperson.

Public discussion: The only public discussion of Vanunu in the Knesset so far did not raise questions of government lies; what some members of parliament wanted to know was how Vanunu, previously suspected of pro-Palestinian sympathies, slip-

ped through the fingers of the security services and left the country with sensitive information.

A spokesperson for the Israeli military, asked about nuclear weapons, said: "We have none, and we don't comment on the subject." Typical of the government's security mania, she refused to give her name for fear that her simple statement had overstepped her authority.

For information on the subject, the Israeli public is dependent on foreign investigative journalists. Military censors would not allow the Israeli press to break stories such as the Vanunu exposé or allegations that he was kidnapped by security agents in Rome to bring him home for trial. But once the news breaks outside the country, the domestic press is free to reprint the articles, which it did. Yet for the first week, additional analysis and editorials on Vanunu were banned.

The Israeli government secrecy surrounding nuclear policy is typical of its military and foreign affairs. But there may be an additional reason for the government to keep quiet about its nuclear capability. Israel never signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or opened its nuclear research facilities to international inspection. The government likely fears reproach by the U.S. and other nations, just as Pakistan's bomb has called into question continued U.S. aid to Pakistan.

Stagnant movement: In the face of governmental secrecy, anti-nuclear activists have had a difficult time mustering public support. A panel discussion in January sponsored by the Israeli Committee for the Prevention of Nuclear War attracted 200 people, the largest anti-nuclear gathering so far. Organizers were pleased with the turnout, but it did not impress Yoram Nimrod, one of the panelists and a founder of Israel's first anti-nuclear group in 1961. That

group, Committee for the Denuclearization of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, disbanded in 1967.

"I've seen the same faces," Nimrod said. "Most are easily recognized. They are the same people committed to the idea 20 years ago. There is no anti-nuclear movement. The public mind is empty. There are [just a few] people who are for or against."

In *These Times* correspondent Hillel Schenker, a spokesperson for the Israeli Committee for the Prevention of Nuclear War,

Despite Mordechai Vanunu's exposé of Israel's atom bomb factory a year ago, few Israelis seem to be concerned about the dangers of nuclear confrontation in the Middle East.

said it has never been easy to win converts. Before the formation of the committee, he helped organize a still-born anti-nuclear forum in 1982. The forum was cancelled after Israel invaded southern Lebanon.

"This is all in its initial stages," Schenker says of the new committee, which was formed in January 1986. Conventional war with Israel's Arab neighbors is the ever-present issue, he says. "The public doesn't want to be bothered with an issue that seems very abstract."

"You just have to look at the traumas during the Holocaust," Nimrod says, "and the way the Arabs have talked about eliminating Israel. The public, uneducated

about the nuclear issue, is thinking it is a weapon of last resort."

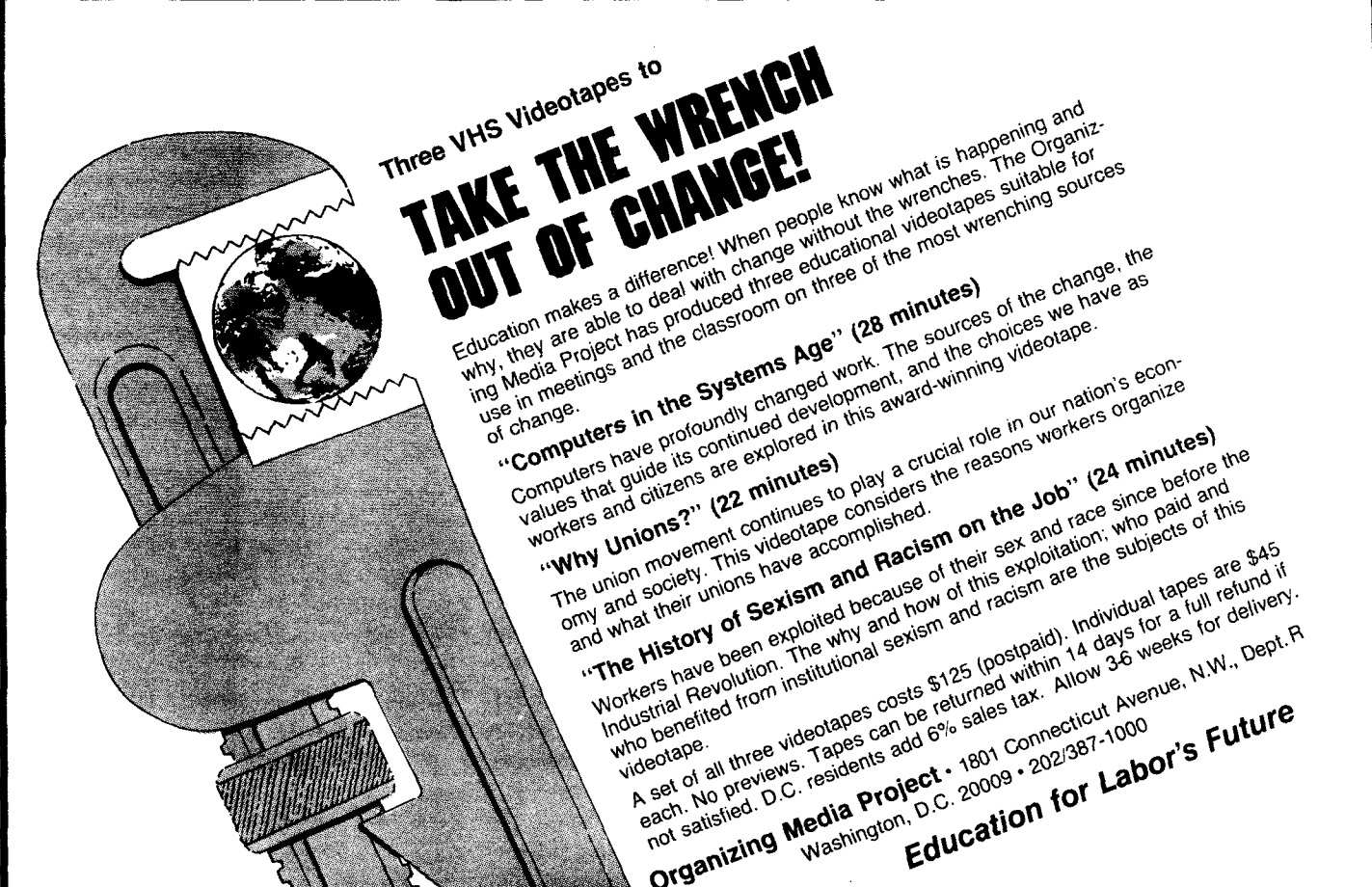
Left-wing parties support the call for a Middle East nuclear-free zone, but it is not one of their major issues. "It will be in our platform, but it won't be part of the debate because people aren't interested," says David Eden, chief of staff of Mapam.

Vanunu has been a double-edged sword for anti-nuclear activists: how to capitalize on the publicity without being tainted by the tag of traitor. Schenker says that without the publicity over Vanunu, it would have been difficult to attract 20, much less 200, people to a discussion of nuclear arms. But the anti-nuclear committee has carefully distanced itself from the controversial figure. "Vanunu is not seen by the Israeli public or peace movement as an Israeli Daniel Ellsberg," Schenker says. "Security is such a sensitive issue."

A small group formed to support Vanunu, but it does not work with the Committee for the Prevention of Nuclear War. In the polarized world of Israeli politics, the pro-Vanunu group is on the fringe because of its members' pro-Palestinian beliefs. Several members of the pro-Vanunu group were arrested when police closed down the West Bank Information Center on the grounds of alleged ties to Palestinian terrorists.

As long as Israel is the only nuclear power in the Middle East, its citizens, surrounded and outnumbered by hostile countries, may feel comforted by its nuclear arsenal. But the expanding nuclear club is unlikely to exclude Israel's enemies for long. An Israeli air force strike against an Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981 set back that country's chances of developing the bomb in the short term. But like South Africa, Pakistan and India, Arab countries will someday be able to purchase the technology and materials needed to develop their own bomb. Until then, a combination of public apathy and government secrecy will likely keep the issue of a nuclearized Middle East on the sidelines.

David Newdorf recently returned from a research trip to Israel.



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Education for Labor's Future

Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987

By Bob Woodward

Simon & Schuster, 543 pp., \$21.95

By Peter Kornbluh

IN THE WAKE OF THE IRAN-CONTRA scandal it is hard to be shocked by the criminality of the national security state. As theatrical as the hearings were, they still produced a flood of incontrovertible evidence that the Reagan administration committed innumerable violations of law and principle, among them: acts of terrorism, collaboration with drug smugglers and gun-runners, the orchestration of disinformation campaigns abroad and white propaganda campaigns at home, and the systematic deception of Congress and the general public.

These crimes were an integral part of a series of clandestine operations in Central America and the Middle East undertaken in the name of, but behind the backs of, the American people. They reaffirm the observation of the late Sen. Frank Church—that covert action is nothing more than “a semantic disguise for murder, coercion, blackmail, bribery, the spreading of lies, whatever is deemed useful in manipulating the internal politics of other countries.”

Even so, the administration's proclivity for secret wars—and the damage it has wrought—is not expected to be a major focus of the forthcoming Final Report by the Iran/Contra Committee. Covert operations in general, and the CIA in particular, emerged as the sacred cows of the congressional hearings. One after another, committee members announced that they supported covert operations in principle—but didn't agree with the way that those in Iran and Nicaragua had been handled. Not a single senator or congressman suggested that the very maintenance of institutions dedicated to secrecy and stealth is responsible for the Iran-contra scandal and, indeed, makes future scandals inevitable.

Contragate culpability: Bob Woodward's new book, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987*, therefore, serves as an important supplement to the forthcoming congressional report. Unlike the hearings, the book makes it crystal clear that the illegal Iran-contra operations were the logical outgrowth of administration schemes to circumvent the law and public accountability that date back to the beginning of Reagan's presidency.

Oliver North misled the committees when he testified that CIA Director William Casey had planned to create an “off-the-shelf, self-sustaining, full service” covert capability. Such a capability, Woodward writes, had long been operational when Congress cut off aid to the



William Casey: The debate over whether he knew about Irangate misses the point.

Knock on Woodward: Casey as Mr. Big

contras in 1984. And the CIA had already enlisted surrogate financiers and foreign agents to circumvent Congress and conduct murder and mayhem throughout the Third World.

This is a book that deserves serious, if critical, scrutiny. Its significance, however, has been obscured by the hype and hoopla surrounding the journalist-as-celebrity author. In part, this is attributable to Simon and Schuster's marketing strategy. Upon sighting the book in the store window, any potential buyer would think that its title is BOB WOODWARD, and that it is written by someone named Veil—such is the disparity between the size of his name and the small print of the title.

The significant implications of the book have been overshadowed by a truly asinine debate about its final two pages where Woodward describes his last, deathbed interview with Casey who admits his knowledge of the diversion of Iran funds to the contras. To be sure, the prose is poor: “I took his hand to shake it in a greeting. He grabbed my hand and squeezed, peace and sunlight in the room for a moment.” And the information is old. During the Iran-contra hearings North testified that “Casey knew”; and among administration-watchers

there has never been any doubt that the CIA was present at the creation of what North called a “neat idea” to use the Ayatollah's money to sustain the contras.

Press distortions: But the press has fixated on this scene, elevating it to the most important in the book. On ABC's *Nightline*, Ted Koppel devoted almost 20 minutes to a facile discussion between Woodward and Casey's widow, Sophia, on the extent to which the author had access to the CIA director. In contrast, Koppel asked only one

Veil's significance is obscured by the hype. The book's greatest flaw is that it is essentially a biography of William Casey and not about the CIA or its secret wars.

question about the book's most serious revelation—that in March 1985 the CIA engineered a terrorist assassination attack on Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah in Lebanon, which resulted in the

death of 80 innocent men, women and children and injury to 200 more.

The story of the Fadlallah mission, which violated Reagan's own executive order prohibiting the CIA from participating in assassination, is accompanied by a host of other new details about Casey's CIA. (The keepers of the secrets such as former CIA directors Stansfield Turner and Richard Helms have already begun to squawk about its revelations.) Woodward lifts the veil of secrecy surrounding CIA support for numerous heads of state, including Amin Gemayel, Anwar Sadat and Joseph Mobutu.

THE CIA

His discussion of the clash between John Horton, the CIA's Latin America analyst, and Casey over the wording of a CIA intelligence estimate on instability in Mexico, demonstrates just how far the CIA director was willing to corrupt the intelligence analysis process in order to advance the U.S. war in Central America. His treatment of the clashes between Casey and the House and Senate Intelligence Committees—many of Woodward's sources are clearly past and current members—exposes the hypocrisy of those legislators who pretend to be overseeing CIA operations.

Woodward is also to be commended for exposing the character of many of Reagan's national security managers. Although he has publicly lauded Casey as an “absolutely extraordinary man,” Woodward's portrait of the CIA director and the men around him is one of macho gutter-mouths wreaking havoc on the Third World in order to prove their manhood. “He has balls of magnesium,” CIA Deputy Director Clair George says admiringly of Casey. “They are like a bunch of kids,” as Woodward quotes Sen. Patrick Leahy on the CIA. “It's like playing cowboys and Indians, playing games, a Saturday-afternoon matinee.”

Yet, for all the investigative effort, there is much less here than meets the eye. The dominant scenes are of bureaucratic infighting and Casey's wars with the Congressional Intelligence Oversight Committees, not of actual CIA secret operations abroad. There is little new offered in Woodward's discussion of the CIA's largest and longest covert war in Afghanistan. CIA operations inside Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador are largely left to the reader's imagination. There is no reference to how the CIA hired a public relations firm in Miami in 1983—at a tidy \$600,000 a year, to recreate the image of the contras as freedom fighters, nor of how Casey organized a network of private public relations professionals—according to recently released National Security Council documents

—to “market the issue of Central America” to a skeptical American public. Many have said these stories should have been published in the *Washington Post*, but even in the book he appears to be holding back. Although he has said to interviewers that *Veil* is not a “sanitized” version, he has also admitted that he “attempted to be very careful” not to reveal classified information that would damage ongoing operations.

Fixated on Mr. Big: But the book's greatest flaw is that it is essentially a biography of William Casey and not about the CIA or its secret wars. Thus the complexity of the national security state and the phenomenon of covert operations is reduced to the personage of one old man, who, we read, overcomes the bureaucratic resistance within the CIA and the State Department to resurrect the agency from the doldrums of the post-Watergate years.

Casey emerges from Woodward's pages not only as the nation's super spymaster, but also as its foremost foreign policy maker. He is given almost singlehanded credit for Reagan's most notorious policies, among them supporting the contras, backing Ferdinand Marcos to the end, derailing arms control talks with the Soviets and selling arms to terrorists in Iran. In the book's only passage where Woodward offers any reflection on his subject he writes:

“More than ever it was evident how preeminent this man had been to the Reagan administration's aspirations and predicaments. As much as anybody's, even the president's, Casey's convictions, fierce loyalties and obsessions were behind the contra operation, the Iran initiative and the range of other secret undertakings and clandestine operations.”

Having bestowed upon William Casey such omnipotence, Woodward leaves us to believe that things would have been so much different had he never been appointed director of Central Intelligence Agency. Upon being informed that “Casey died” in the last sentence of the book we are left to presume that the nightmare is over.

This is, of course, highly misleading. The national security leviathan is much greater than one man. Our understanding of how it manages—like a reptile—to regrow its clandestine limbs after every scandal is not enhanced by this narrow treatment of the subject. Casey may be gone, but the CIA and its unyielding capacity to bribe, lie, maim and kill in the name of national security and the American way lives on. ■

Peter Kornbluh is an analyst at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C. His book *Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention* has just been published by the Institute for Policy Studies.

The Iran-Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era
By Johnathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott and Jane Hunter
South End Press, 315 pp., \$15.00

The CIA: A Forgotten History
By William Blum
Zed Books, 428 pp., \$15.00

By Richard Ryan

A global CIA scorecard, a timely contragate primer

IN A FEW WEEKS THE SELECT CONGRESSIONAL Committees will release their final report on the Iran-contra scandal, and the informed citizenry, such as it is, may now prepare to measure its reasonable expectations of justice against what Congress has actually wrought. Having made sweet music with Oliver North and pitched the woo with George Shultz and Caspar Weinberger, the committees have given us fair warning of what to expect. The "worst-case scenario" has the committees releasing a document that is little more than an elaboration on that masterpiece of damage control, the report of the Tower Commission (see "The Tower Omission," *In These Times*, March 11).

Such an analysis would focus on the National Security Council (NSC) banditos McFarlane, Poin-dexter and North, with privateers Richard Secord and Albert Hakim cast in supporting roles, and William Casey stepping in for the creepy cameo appearance. Such an analysis would suppress questions of wider complicity within the administration—questions focusing on George Bush and Edwin Meese, both members of the NSC. And it would overlook areas the committees might legitimately have explored—the use of drug money to finance covert operations in Latin America, the manipulation of American foreign policy by right-wing terrorists throughout the hemisphere; U.S. complicity in the attempted assassination of contra leader Eden Pastora; the use of Israel as a conduit for money and arms to pariah dictatorships such as Guatemala and South Africa; the contrivance of plots to murder Muammar Khadafy and other radical Islamic leaders.

What could the public have discovered about these issues? Readers wanting insight into the current foreign policy disaster will not do better than to pick up a copy of *The Iran-Contra Connection*, by journalists Johnathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott and Jane Hunter (Marshall and Scott wrote the bulk of the volume, with Scott contributing an excellent chapter on the history of Israeli involvement in Central America).

A cornucopia of evidence: *The Iran-Contra Connection's* great weakness is that it contains virtually no original reporting. Like the much-praised *The Chronology*—the weighty synopsis of news reports on the Iran-contra scandal compiled by the National Security Archive—*The Connection* relies

on the extensive work done over the years by the community of investigative journalists who have gone up against the American intelligence establishment. Two factors, however, set *The Connection* apart from *The Chronology* and make it a superior work. First, while *The Chronology* limited itself to mainstream press accounts, *The Connection* also draws on the alternative press (including this publication) as well as the numerous fine books detailing America's entanglement with violent right-wing movements around the world. (The single most important source for Scott's chapters is Jon Lee Anderson and Scott Anderson's expose of the World Anti-Communist League, *Inside the League*).

Second, *The Connection* is not simply a repository of facts, but an interpretive work—the authors are guided by a sense of contemporary history. *The Connection* goes beyond its stated topic to explore a genuinely global network of subversion and terror that has sullied our country's reputation for the past 30 years.

The Connection's theme is that covert action has its own logic that invariably supercedes the purpose for which the action was intended, and is, in its fundamental nature, anti-democratic. What the authors set out to do is show how this theme manifests itself in recent U.S.

The congressional report is expected to shed little light on the Iran-contra scandal, so readers must look elsewhere.

foreign policy adventures.

Of these excursions into shadow-land, the greatest debacle was surely the Bay of Pigs invasion and the subsequent CIA-orchestrated plots to kill Fidel Castro. As Marshall and Scott note, the large-scale recruitment and training of rightist Cuban exiles set in motion an appalling chain of events that has undermined U.S. foreign policy ever since.

The disposal problem: In the wake of the failed invasion, the U.S. had to confront what Allen Dulles, CIA director at the time of the Bay of Pigs, called "the disposal problem." Dulles was referring to the difficulty of defusing a small army of Cuban counterrevolutionaries who could do nothing in the face of Castro's apparent invulnerability. Over the next 20 years the Bay

of Pigs veterans, congregated in the so-called 2506 Brigade, would be involved in paramilitary operations in Argentina, Chile, Guatemala and, of course, Somoza's Nicaragua. In

CONTRAGATE

1976 some of the openly fascist members of the Cuban exile community would help found the Congress of Revolutionary Organizations (CORU), a group that would provide training to death squads throughout Latin America.

Obviously, the likely contra failure in Nicaragua will create a similar "disposal problem"—an especially chilling thought when one recalls that the violence of Cuban veterans has never been confined to Latin America. Many Miami-based Cubans, in the ferment of the '60s, brought their struggle to these shores, bombing diplomatic offices, killing opponents, even firing a bazooka at the U.N. Moreover, the oligarchy in prerevolutionary Cuba was closely linked to organized crime in this country; many of the

exiles, once transplanted to the States, continued to make their living at such illicit activities as drug-smuggling.

And it was inevitable that their CIA "handlers," always anxious to find imaginative uses for their action-hungry proteges, would bring the Cubans into American politics. Cuban involvement in the Water-gate burglary is widely known, and we continue to be haunted by the possibility that Cuban fascists took part in the assassination of President Kennedy.

The Connection devotes considerable attention to the activities of Cuban exiles, and also to the efforts of the Argentine junta in the late '70s. The authors draw on a number of sources to illustrate Somoza's reliance on Argentina after U.S. aid to Nicaragua dried up under Carter's human rights program.

Once Somoza fell, both Argentina and Guatemala began building the contra movement. A question that the Select Committees avoided was how, in the early days of the Reagan administration, right-wing terror

organizers in Argentina and Guatemala were granted ready access to the highest levels of the Reagan administration.

Left it to Deaver? *The Connection* resurrects the smoldering possibility that Reagan-aide Michael Deaver engineered an alliance between the Reagan campaign and the Latin American right. Deaver represented both Argentine and Guatemalan interests in this country prior to 1980, and news reports suggest that millions in unauthorized Guatemalan campaign contributions may have come to the Reagan campaign through Deaver. (Scott calls this the greatest unexplored scandal of the Reagan administration.) As *The Connection* makes clear, Deaver, now on trial for illegal lobbying activities following his departure from the Reagan administration, was a key link between foreign right-wing factions and the Reagan administration in its early days. Covert U.S. support for the contras was a logical extension of these relationships.

Scapegoating Israel: Another issue *The Connection* explores is Israeli involvement in the scandal. (Because the Israeli government did not cooperate with the congressional investigation and in light of the Democratic Party's inevitable deference to Israel, the report of the Select Committees will probably add little to the existing accounts.) Hunter's assertion that the decision to divert funds from the Iran arms sale originated with Israel is unconvincing; evidence for this rests on the claims of an administration that has from the start sought to interpose Israel between itself and the arms deal.

What is clear, from Hunter's evidence, is that Israel willingly colluded with the U.S. on a number of covert operations in order to curry favor with the Reagan administration, which the Israelis feared would take a pro-Arab slant. Hunter's account goes far toward explaining the disastrous rightward tilt of Israeli foreign policy. Following the 1967 war, the Israelis' domestic arms industry expanded to the point where it dominated the economy. As Israel's economic position deteriorated its need for foreign exchange led it to cultivate ties with even the most distasteful regimes—most relevantly with Iran and Guatemala. An increasingly conservative Israeli government, with strong economic ties to a number of right-wing governments in Latin America, thus found itself caught between its own powerful arms industry and the militant anti-communism of the Reagan administration; naturally it became an important part of the U.S. covert network.

Not that the Israelis never took the lead in generating the crisis; once the Israelis made the initial contact with the Khomeini government on our behalf, they constantly

Continued on page 22



By Pat Aufderheide

Free to Be Unfair

When the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced this summer that it would no longer enforce the Fairness Doctrine, which required broadcasters to air more than one side of controversial issues, newspapers celebrated the victory for the First Amendment. (Most of them failed to acknowledge their broadcast holdings, by the way.) And right-wing groups promptly launched a batch of pro-contra aid TV ads. But Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) called the FCC "lickspittles" and promised, with Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-SC), to attach a codification of the Doctrine in must-pass legislation this autumn. His concern was not simply the continued enforcement of legally mandated public-interest provisions of which the Fairness Doctrine is just one, but also the right of Congress to set the agenda for federal agencies.

Rep. Al Swift (D-WA) recently put broadcasters who want to lobby Congress on notice: "If they want to get in the way of Congress asserting its rightful and constitutional role in establishing [communications] policy, that is certainly their business. But they could also walk in front of a truck." They already may have. Industry groups have called for an end to related provisions, including the "political attack" rule, requiring stations to air opportunities to respond to charges levelled at an individual or group. That's a red flag to legislators who treasure the equal-time rule, which exists under the same principles that created the Fairness Doctrine. Pro-codification legislators also have the support of 16 ex-FCC commissioners.

He-Man, Say "Mattel"

The courts have taken the FCC to task for its attempt to free broadcasters from regulation in children's TV. First, in June a court ruling required the FCC to reconsider its order striking limits on commercial time in children's programming. Then in late September another court decision charged the FCC with lax enforcement of another rule. The law requires that commercial sponsors be identified; Mattel Corporation has been offering *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* cartoon series to stations without payment, in barter for two minutes of commercial time sometime during the day. (Mattel markets toys based on the show's characters.) A public-interest lawsuit had charged that the FCC was fudging in its responsibilities, and the court agreed. The decision reinforces the case for continued regulation of kids' programming, and focuses attention on increasing integration of toys and programming.

But Move Over for Captain Power

At this point, *He-man* is old news to Mattel, a pioneer in interactive TV shows and video cassettes that trigger matching toys. *Captain Power*, with interactive segments that work like video games both on-air and on cassette, only works interactively if you have a Mattel power jet to match. Mattel's also working on an interactive "Barbie" doll series—think about it. The kids' video market is booming, with aggressive cross-feeding; the videos promote related commodities, like the high-priced Teddy Ruxpin, a talking bear with a line of kids' clothes as well as a video to his name. But what Action for Children's Television has called a "program-length commercial"—shows like those featuring He-Man and Strawberry Shortcake—are beginning to look like ancestors of a total immersion experience in childhood consumerism.

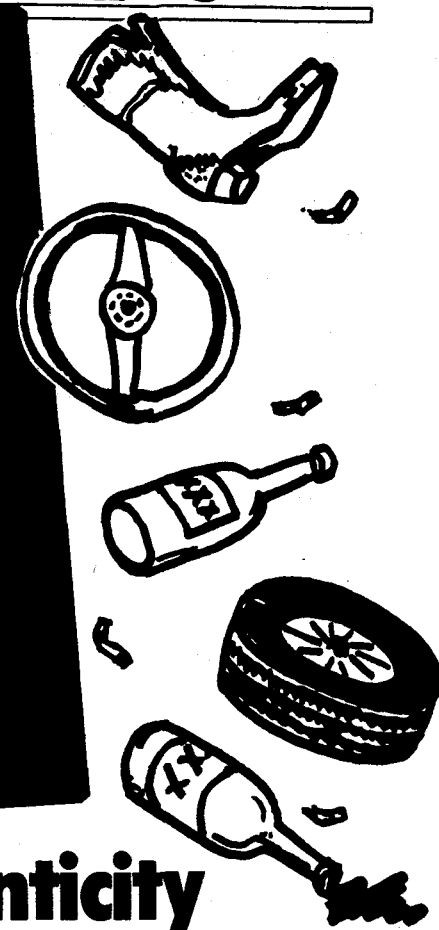
Just Like Downtown

Public television in the 1980s has positively slalomed down the slippery slope to imitation-commercial broadcasting in its search for subscribers and corporate donors to make the budget. In the process, it's eroding the argument for public TV (as some commercial broadcasters have noted with the alarm that comes along with the fear of more competition if public broadcasting disappears entirely). The latest bit of evidence is *Sneak Previews*, the show that began with Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert on Chicago's WTTW. When they went commercial, WTTW tried again, and found two nice haircuts in suits to do the job (the faces changed, but the look was the same). Now you don't even have to watch public TV to watch the film clips and accompanying chat; Lifetime cable channel has struck a deal with WTTW to run the show before it's shown on national TV (and a few days after WTTW airs it in Chicago). Lifetime's offer came after WTTW couldn't raise funds for the show from inside the system. So WTTW's production facilities and talent—funded by tax dollars and subscribers—are now dedicated to producing a show that any public station can buy, but cable subscribers can see first.

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IN THE ARTS

Country Music Foundation



Hankering for authenticity

Just Me and My Guitar
(Country Music Foundation)

Rare Takes and Radio Cuts
(Polydor)

On the Air
(Polydor)

By Hank Williams

By Lance Compa

MOST AMERICANS FILE THE music of Hank Williams under "Country, Redneck," in a niche marked by honky-tonks, trains and cheating hearts. Even those who fancy a little country music now and then place Williams in a narrow pre-rock country corner with singers like Jimmie Rodgers, Roy Acuff and Hank Snow. But new issues of little-known Williams recordings elevate his work to a broader category in a file marked "Country, American," with much to say about both subjects.

Williams sings about the small town that everybody comes from, even if it has a giant city superimposed on it. Memory is rooted in that first village of parents and siblings, cousins and neighbors and playmates. Later, high school is a small town of social classes and cliques. Attachments form and harden and loosen—and images of the grownup world take mysterious shape. Then in adulthood, when the mysteries are supposed to be solved, new questions arise.

We never leave that home no matter how a child grows to match a city's measure. That's why Williams' music is so affecting even for someone not country or redneck, but just American. The new Williams recordings capture all the emotions and mysteries of small town memories, bringing hazy pic-

tures into focus for those tiring now of the nostalgia that goes with rock 'n' roll heritage and looking for something more.

Baby-boomers' lullaby: In just a half decade turning on 1950, Williams brought country music out of the country and into the cities and growing suburbs around the nation. He was 29 years old when he died on New Year's Day, 1953; his songs had wafted over the cribs of the first baby boomers. In constant pain from a deformed backbone, dissolute from drugs and alcohol to ease his pain, emotionally wracked by the upheaval of a failed marriage, Williams somehow reached deep into the heart of the country and wailed back strong, stabbing songs of things that matter, like love and work and faith and death.

Earlier heroes like Jimmie Rodgers and Roy Acuff carried country music songs to an audience throughout the South and Southwest, helping make the Grand Ole Opry the country's equivalent of black America's Apollo Theater and urban America's Broadway. Williams brought country music to the city. He was the first genuine crossover artist, bringing the Weavers and their folk music in his wake and making possible the movement of "race" music from black clubs and obscure black record labels to the national charts. After that, of course, came rock 'n' roll.

In retrospect it seems that it was no coincidence that Williams succeeded in those pivotal postwar years. His songs expressed the home truths of a rural and working America at a time when the U.S. was assuming the burdens of empire. His simple chords and plain, powerful lyrics about love and life in the country must have struck a collective chord of doubt in an

America now occupying defeated Asian and European lands. Did listeners find solace in the conclusion of his "Settin' the Woods on Fire" when Williams sang "Tonight we'll

MUSIC

do all the law's allowin', tomorrow I'll be right back plowin'?"

That stretches a point; if anyone's music was apolitical it was Williams'. But maybe there's a political lesson here after all. Critics of what they call a cultural orthodoxy on the left single out radical attempts at a "people's" music as hypocritical, ineffective aping of a stereotyped folk style.

The authenticity rap: Lambasting the folksy, solo guitar, unrelentingly relevant music of Pete Seeger, a WASP Harvard dropout, and Si Kahn, a rabbi's son from Pittsburgh who sings of Southern labor and civil rights struggles, historian Jesse Lemisch, in a controversial article in *The Nation* last year, asked of radical artists, "Must they pretend to be somebody else and speak in a voice that they imagine, erroneously, to be mainstream American? Why does authenticity reside only in the accents of the South and West?" Instead of Seeger and Kahn's "ritual of affirmation" for leftists, says Lemisch, radicals should develop a varied, modern voice using methods of music video, TV advertisements and avant-garde filmmakers.

Lemisch and like-minded critics make a valid point about the danger of overly "correct" art. But they go too far toward a revised *auteur* theory: that an art must be consistent with the artist's cultural background or else be inauthentic, and ultimately worthless.

Assuming this bias, the music of Pete Seeger can't match that of



Woody Guthrie, a genuine Okie, even though Seeger learned from Guthrie and seeks to carry on his tradition. Likewise Si Kahn necessarily flops at singing songs of Southern struggle, even after spending 20 years organizing civil rights and trade union movements there.

Two friends of mine further illuminate this theoretical conundrum of authenticity. They make old-time music together in a string band. He is a red-diaper baby from Greenwich Village; she is a coal miner's daughter from Bluefield, W.V., who still stresses the first syllable in "insurance" and "umbrella" and somehow makes "oil" a three-syllable word.

You would think he's faking and she's genuine when they sing "A Miner's Life," an old coal-miner's lament. But it's more complicated than that. He's a trade unionist, an organizer, an agitator for workers' rights. She's a mathematician and computer scientist. So when they twang out "Keep your hand upon the dollar and your eye upon the scale," who is authentic and who's faking?

Music first: But all this ballyhoo can obscure the fact that music comes first, not the artist—and no one illustrates this point better than Hank Williams. In his personal life he was something of a crud: a mama's boy, a boozier, a drug addict, a tomcat, a spendthrift, among other vices. Still, if the music works, so much the better for us all, whatever the cultural history of the singer or the listener.

In another irony of authenticity, Williams' hit songs were helped most by Fred Rose, a Jew from Chicago who saw the potential in Williams' work for moving country music away from the cracker stereotype. Rose was a producer

who had a vision of this simple, strong music reaching listeners nationwide.

Rose had an ear for his artists' voices. He wrote many country hits of his own—"Pins and Needles," "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" and others—after switching from an earlier, mainstream career that included writing hit songs for Sophie Tucker like "Deed I Do" and "Honest and Truly." A great editor, Rose coddled and prodded and inspired his charges. Williams would jot down notes on the back of envelopes, and he and Rose would spend hours together polishing the song to perfection. The collaboration of Williams and Rose produced classics like "Jambalaya," "I Can't Help It If I'm Still in Love with You," "Cold, Cold Heart," "Honky Tonk Blues," "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," "Ramblin' Man" and others that have passed into the national songbook.

Three features of Williams' songs made his work irresistible for both Southern and non-Southern fans who pulled his music out of the country ghetto after the war. First came simple melody with a driving beat, quickly memorized and moving in the mind. Next, a turn of accent that brings a country smack to a song, giving even a Northeast urbanite a glove-tight feel for the land. Finally, there was Williams' use of an unforced American slang, just the right choice of words and images for the point a song was making.

They may be universal in Southern speech and country singing, but Williams' regionalisms strike Northern ears with the perfect down-home American embellishment. "I have the in-vertation that you sent me," Williams cries at the start of "Wedding Bells," a lament for a lost love about to wed another.

In another song he admonishes a nosy neighbor, "Why don't you mind your own bidness?" In "Honky Tonk Blues" he sings, "Left my home down on the roo-al route," giving a double country effect in the pronunciation of rural and the old post-office term for mail to the farm—North or South. Williams' use of language was the strongest part of his popular appeal.

Williams' solo flight: *Just Me and My Guitar*, an album recently released by the Country Music

Dwight Yoakam, Ricky Scaggs, and other country music "new traditionalists" owe much to Hank Williams, who once said, "You got to have smelt a lot of mule manure before you can sing like a hillbilly."

Foundation (CMF-006), is a collection of songs by Williams alone, without the usual backdrop of his Drifting Cowboys (usually a fiddle, a steel guitar, a string bass and an electric lead guitar—Williams played rhythm). The poignancy of his music comes through strongest here, with simple chords and the heartfelt cutting sound that characterized Williams' voice. Even what sounds like a drug and drink-slurred rendition of his classic "Your Cheatin' Heart"—Williams' abuse of substance, women and self made Elvis Presley look like a choirboy—

still comes across powerfully, reflecting Williams' often quoted description of country music's sincerity: "You got to have smelt a lot of mule manure before you can sing like a hillbilly."

Williams' earliest recordings in the mid-'40s were described by a reviewer of the time as "backwoods gospel singing—way back in the woods." The memory of childhood church singing in his Alabama home towns stayed with Williams' work. His religious verse ranges from graveside musings like "House of Gold" and "Cold Grey Tomb of Stone" to the swinging ecstasy of what is now a churchgoer's ode to joy: "No more darkness, no more night/ Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight/ Praise the Lord, I saw the light!"

As with other great American songwriters, there is no escaping black music's influence on Williams' work. He grew up in the black belt, which gave Williams an advantage over, say, Cole Porter or Harold Arlen, who came late to hear Harlem's music. Fred Rose heard black Chicago blues singers when he was young, which surely helped the rapport between him and Williams. Those blues performers probably sounded much like Rufus Payne, a black street singer called Tee-tot, who taught the young Hank Williams his first guitar chords and a song, "My Bucket's Got a Hole in It," that became one of his early national hit records.

Rare Takes and Radio Cuts and *On the Air* are two recent releases of Williams' unissued studio recordings and non-Opry radio broadcasts (Polydor 422-823695-4 and 422-827531-1). Like *Just Me and My Guitar*, they are compelling for their rough-hewn power. They lack the polish of a final cut or an Opry production.

Some spoken remarks on the radio shows, though banal for their content, reflect Williams' Alabama twang and the edged nasal voice so familiar in his music. These three albums show a rawer side of Williams' work than his studio releases, but the effect of a single, unadorned statement from the heart is the same.

Later, after Williams made country a national music, Nashville producers who succeeded Fred Rose moved toward a bigger-is-better approach. Orchestral backdrops and ornate choral accompaniment made for a heavily-arranged new Nashville sound—Nash Trash, as some critics have called it.

New-wave traditionalists: Nashville sold millions of records and made millionaire country stars in the '60s and '70s. For many listeners, though, the formula has begun to wear. Nashville's commercial sound is in trouble today, with sales of the top country hits only half what they were a few years ago. To revive country, "new traditionalists" like Ricky Scaggs, Dwight Yoakam and George Strait are going back to Hank Williams' simplicity and solitary energy.

"Why should I let a producer put strings and vocal groups on my records?" asks Scaggs, who as a teenager played with Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys, champions of genuine up-the-holler bluegrass. "It's the song that's important. Big arrangements would just get in the way." Describing the "new wave" of country music, one country radio station's music director said, "They're going back to the old music in a new way. If Hank Williams had the same technology we had today he would sound the same."

Writing in *Rolling Stone*, Rob Tannenbaum detects a political content in the new country music. "Despite personal and musical differences," he argues, "the New Traditionalists share a critical view of country tradition, reviving and revising the past to wrest the music away from Las Vegas and forge the kind of potent, topical role country has lacked for years." Tannenbaum cites the farming odes of Ricky Scaggs and songs like Dwight Yoakam's "Miner's Prayer" as "the most traditional aspect of the New Traditionalism...this effort to reestablish country as a populist medium."

'60s rock evoked rebelliousness, black anger, sexual freedom and other iconoclasm. Punk and New Wave moved quickly from city to suburb, becoming standards of the shopping mall set. Behind them all, though, the deep-rooted country music of a stubborn American culture carries on. "Hank Williams was the first rock 'n' roller," insists Dwight Yoakam. Polydor is releasing a new series of albums containing every recording Williams ever made. Anyone looking to cure the big chill—or melt a cold, cold heart—ought to get them.

Lance Compa is a critic and labor organizer living in Maryland.

Nicaragua

Continued from page 10

perience of the revolutionary process—which has provided them with a rapid and effective political education.

Nicaragua has young leaders, a young army, young political cadres and a young population. Already grown at age 13 and mature at 25, the young are the government's most ardent supporters.

But the picture can be overdrawn. Not everyone has the same commitment, the same abnegation. Much of the work falls on the shoulders of the most conscientious cadres, who often assume too many roles and responsibilities, always leading to exhaustion and sometimes breakdown.

The demands of war mean that some of the country's regions have been neglected by the new government, leaving them open to contra infiltration and recruitment. There it is difficult to know where recruitment ends and impressment begins.

Counterproductive: Thus, while the costs of the war are visible and terrible, the war has catalyzed and justified the extension and consolidation of Sandinista rule. The contras, through sabotage, murder and intimidation, bleed the economy and induce scarcity.

But the political response to this aggression has been increased education, mobilization and political support for the revolutionary government—not to mention military training and access to modern weaponry. In other words, the political effect of the contra war has been entirely counterproductive.

This lesson is crystal clear in the discourse of the Sandinista government. Ideology as

doctrine is hard to come by in Nicaragua. The government's talk is pragmatic, popular, sometimes contradictory, but always nationalist. Its organizing axis is anti-imperialism, and the war gives this axis an undeniable material reality, an immediacy and an emotional authenticity.

The counterproductive effects of the contras have given the government invaluable political capital in these times of economic distress. And the government is careful not to waste it. A simple leadership style, an openness to criticism—at least in formal meetings "face to face with the people"—and an apparent willingness to admit mistakes allow political support to grow unimpeded. Intelligent use of the mass media, especially television's *Noticiero Sandinista*, nurtures this support, while the real absence of political controls over daily lives and diversions leaves people with an ample margin to pursue their small Third World version of the good life. Cigarettes and beer are freely available, as is every kind of popular music from the U.S.

There is sunshine and sea. But there is also the clear perception that the economic blockade, the bases in Honduras, the war itself are all manifestations of a common enemy, which is, of course, the U.S. government. Thus recurrent and contested contra funding has enabled the Nicaraguan government to construct a popular project of social transformation and has contributed immeasurably to its success in providing Nicaraguans with an identity, a dignity, a place in the world. □

Joe Foweraker is a lecturer in Latin American politics at Britain's University of Essex. He recently travelled to Nicaragua.

CIA scorecard

Continued from page 19

pressured the U.S. to keep up the flow of arms to Iran. In light of Bob Woodward's revelations in the *Washington Post* concerning CIA-sponsored Saudi terrorism, however, one wonders whether Israeli involvement in Reagan's secret wars so vastly exceeded the Saudis'. These scenarios flesh out *The Connection's* central message: The Reagan administration repeatedly created covert intermediaries—the Cubans, the contras, the Israelis—only to find these tails wagging the dog of American imperialism.

This provocative work is hardly definitive, and, having obviously been rushed into print, it cries out for better editing and a more complete index. Nevertheless, a revised and expanded edition should solve these problems, and perhaps even include new answers to the mysteries the authors explore.

A CIA primer: Another recent publication in this vein is William Blum's excellent and entertaining *The CIA: A Forgotten History*. Blum, a widely-publicized freelance journalist, has compiled a nearly-overwhelming case history of the CIA's major operations since its creation at the end of World War II. In 49 studies, Blum methodically recounts the CIA's genius for deception and ruthlessness (many of these episodes should be unfamiliar to even well-read spy-watchers). But the most troubling aspect of Blum's book is the picture it paints of the CIA's competence. Despite certain dramatic disasters (the Bay of Pigs; the fall of the Shah) throughout the developing world, the CIA has proven itself to be marvelously effective at destabilizing and manipulating political reality.

Like *The Iran-Contra Connection*, *A Forgotten History* is a work of compilation rather than original journalism. Blum wrote the book in England and has uncovered many excellent sources in the European press. Because of the book's staccato, anecdotal quality, it is not Blum's perfunctory theme

("covert action stinks") but his stories that will stick in the reader's memory.

For example, in discussing the CIA's efforts to destabilize the Philippines' Huk national movement in the 50s, Blum focuses on Edward Lansdale, the CIA's pre-eminent psychological warrior. To convince the superstitious Huks that they were beset by vampires, one of Lansdale's team snatched a single guerrilla, punctured his throat, drained all the blood from him, then left him where his comrades would be sure to find him. This is the sort of creative thinking and "charm" that made Lansdale a legend in the spy world. On a more contemporary note, Blum catalogues the remarkable set of lies told by the administration to justify the invasion of Grenada, including the invention of a Soviet submarine base—under construction, naturally—on the south side of the island. (Building such a base, in fact, would have been geologically impossible.)

Blum's distaste for the CIA is so great that he occasionally criticizes CIA operations that are arguably morally justified, such as the arming of Tibetan guerrillas against the Chinese invasion in the '50s. Blum's lapses of judgment at such points do raise the issue of when a covert operation in support of nationalist movements might be desirable.

Afghanistan is an interesting case which Blum oddly avoids. The CIA is, of course, aiding the rebels, who are largely reactionaries, whose methods include terrorism, and whose connection to drug-smuggling is, if anything, better documented than that of the Nicaraguan contras. ~~Nevertheless, none but the most unreconstructed leftist would deny the essential justice of the Afghanis' struggle to expel the Soviets. Should the U.S., therefore, support the rebels?~~ Blum passes over such broad philosophical issues, but then his book is meant to be descriptive rather than interpretive, and on those terms it succeeds wonderfully. □

Richard Ryan is the Washington correspondent for the *Texas Observer*.

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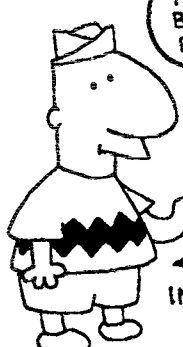
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The perils of privatization

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THERE IS ALWAYS EXCITEMENT about something "new" in France, and the novelty at this *rentree* (the September start of the working year when people are back from summer vacation) is the "new French audiovisual landscape." There is so much talk about the new *paysage audiovisuel français* that the press calls it the "PAF" for short.

What is new about the "PAF" is privatization. Since France's first channel (TF1) was sold to a private owner, advertising now interrupts movies and even an interview with President François Mitterrand. The heralds of free enterprise have been telling the skeptical French that the new PAF is bound to be exciting, because of the invigorating freedom and competition brought in by private ownership. This is the credo of what the French call "liberalism" (and Anglo-Saxons call *laissez-faire*).

But already the landscape is marred by a corpse. On September 21, TF1's new boss, construction tycoon Francis Bouygues, fired popular talk-show host Michel Polac for "overstepping the bounds." Bouygues thereby killed the myth that private television ensured greater freedom of speech than public television.

The right response: Two days before, Polac's show *Droit de Réponse* (Right of Reply) had focused on the controversy surrounding construction of a bridge from the mainland to the island of Ré, near the Atlantic port city of La Rochelle. There were accusations of bribes and illegal building permits. Bouygues' company is building the bridge.

When Bouygues fired Polac, the channel was besieged with protests. Polls showed that up to 60 percent of the public was against the firing. Many viewers were shocked and angry. They had feared privatization would lower quality, killing good shows that cost a lot to produce or have low ratings. This seems to be happening, as TV screens are increasingly filled with idiot games, tacky variety shows and bargain-basement American serials.

But at least "the market," that *deus ex machina*, was supposed to protect and save shows that were really popular. Polac's show was a prize-winner, with high ratings, even late Saturday night. By killing *Droit de Réponse*, Bouygues did more than sacrifice a potential money-maker. He delivered a very audiovisual *coup de grace* to the myth of "liberalism" in France.

Nearly 20 years ago, crowds of French students shouted up to Parisians in their apartments to "shut off the TV and open the window" to see reality live. Since then, the "spectacle society" denounced by the 1968 Situationists has triumphed in the post-1968 normalization. The French have left the streets, unions and political groups. The public site of politics is largely confined to the TV screen.

Droit de Réponse was about the only major program where the spirit of May 1968 lived on, where the screen seemed to "open the window" onto messy reality. Such taboo topics as the French government's sinking of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior* were



Jim Julien

thrown open to two hours of freestyle quarrelling with Polac as sharp but amiable referee. Sometimes the revelations were hard to follow, as six or eight eccentrics, some of them drunk, all shouted their contradictory assertions at once. But that's France.

Polac's show tended to reveal France as it is. Other producers seem to consider their task is to show France what it ought to be.

Born-again free market: In particular, French TV has in recent years been resolutely didactic in its effort to win the French public over to a free-enterprise system of values. The news broadcasts have been sprinkled with charts and graphs laboriously commented on by enthusiastic apostles of the free market. Since charity begins at home, it was only a matter of time until the benefits of free enterprise were extended to television itself. This process began under Mitterrand's Socialist government but has been greatly accelerated since the conservatives returned to power in March 1986. (Mitterrand and conservative Prime Minister Jacques Chirac currently share power in what is known as "cohabitation," an arrangement in which Chirac has the upper hand.)

To supervise and regulate the audiovisual media, Mitterrand had set up a High Authority which gained a reputation for impartiality. Once in power Chirac promptly abolished the High Authority and replaced it with a new National Commission for Communications and Liberties

(CNCL), packed with party cronies.

In his mid-September TV interview interrupted by advertising, Mitterrand said that "the CNCL has done nothing up to now that might inspire that sentiment called respect."

This presidential understatement helped open the floodgates of criticism. The CNCL redistributed the Paris FM band frequencies using no defined criterion. A number of radio stations that were operating were eliminated and the air waves passed to phantom stations belonging to right-wing insiders. The CNCL has been lax in enforcing the contractual obligations of the new private TV stations. For instance,

An onslaught of advertising, tacky variety shows and bargain-basement American serials is turning French TV into *je ne sais quoi*.

Channel 5 hedges on its obligation to program a certain percentage of original French productions (meaning it should finance their creation) by rebroadcasting products of public TV. The creative professions are alarmed, all the more as the French cinema industry is going the way

of the Italian film industry, that is, on the road to ruin. In three years, films shown on TV have roughly tripled, going from 500 to 1,400. In the first half of 1987, movie theater attendance dropped 20 percent, and 500 movie houses are having to close.

The CNCL is also being accused of getting Bouygues to silence Michel Polac.

The CNCL's biggest task was selling TF1 to private owners. Some potential buyers backed off, complaining the station was overpriced. Unexpectedly, TF1 was sold to Bouygues, a stolid looking construction tycoon.

Perils of privatization: Bouygues looked naively happy to have bought the chain with all the best-known stars. But within a few days, the stars were streaming over to the new Channel 5 for more money. Bouygues began to wear the uneasy look of someone who suspects he has been taken in.

Channel 5 was first licensed under the Socialists to Italian TV lord Silvio Berlusconi. Under Chirac, the right-wing press lord Robert Hersant was brought in and made president.

On September 4, Bouygues wrote to the CNCL complaining that Channel 5, originally a small regional station, was being allowed to increase its service area so as to wipe out TF1's advantage, for which Bouygues had paid so dearly. On September 12, Polac echoed those accusations in a show devoted to the CNCL and added a few more. It was suggested in the press that CNCL members had been bribed by Hersant or by applicants for FM frequencies. At the same time, Polac's silent chorus of cartoonists, a regular feature on the show, turned out rude drawings insulting the CNCL.

This led CNCL President Gabriel de Broglie to write a private letter of protest to Bouygues holding him personally responsible for everything said on TF1, including the statements and drawings emerging from the chaos of *Droit de Réponse*. The letter pointed out that Bouygues' authorization implied "direct and confident relations" with the CNCL, which could decide whether or not the conditions of the authorization to buy TF1 were being met. In short, the CNCL threatened Bouygues with trouble if he failed to rein in Polac.

Bouygues answered that he was trying to keep Polac within bounds and was not responsible for his show. A few days later *Droit de Réponse* focused on the Ré island bridge, complete with drawings that were less virulent than usual but still, apparently, offensive to Bouygues. That was a good pretext to get rid of Polac and try to stay in the good graces of the CNCL, the better to protect his investment against Hersant's Channel 5.

Such is free enterprise, French style. The whole affair has embarrassed Chirac and helped give the media-freedom issue to the Socialists. It has brought out the public's devotion to Polac, who will probably get a new show somewhere if he wants one.

If he had not been fired, Polac's next show would have been an expose of undercover arms exports. ■